



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

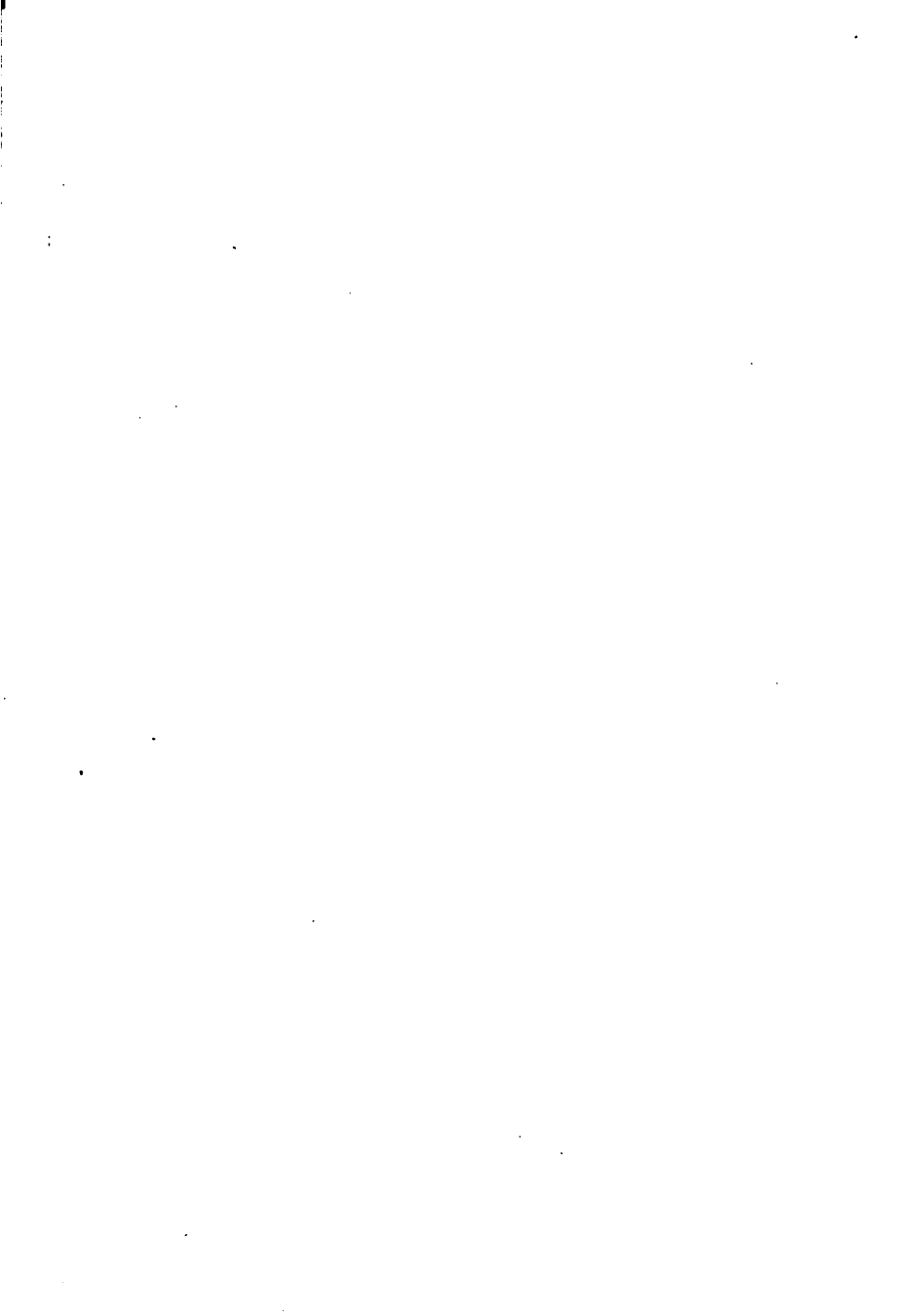
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**



**LIBRARY OF THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF EDUCATION**





## **A PARENT'S JOB**



# A PARENT'S JOB

By

COLUMBUS N. MILLARD

*Formerly Assistant Superintendent  
of Schools, Buffalo,  
New York*



THE PILGRIM PRESS

BOSTON

CHICAGO

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
MONROE C. GUTMAN LIBRARY

LC225  
.M5

DEC 31 1937

COPYRIGHT 1917  
By C. N. MILLARD

THE PILGRIM PRESS  
BOSTON



## PREFACE

**T**HERE are few school principals who are not frequently requested by parents to promote pupils at the end of a school year, regardless of their standings. Whether the children are fitted to do the work of the succeeding grade, is apparently a matter of no concern to the anxious parent. The mere fact that their pride will be hurt by being kept back seems to be the only point considered.

The readiness with which parents often intercede with school authorities for a child to give up a study that is irksome to him is another regrettable tendency which is unfortunately altogether too common. In such instances neither the intrinsic value of the subject nor the possibility of its affording most excellent training for the child is taken into consideration. "*He doesn't like it*" is obviously to them an all-sufficient reason.

Lack of definite responsibility for home duties and absence of deferential respect for their elders are the two particulars in which children of today differ most widely from

## PREFACE

---

young folk of twenty years ago. Teachers are deeply impressed with this fact and often comment on it; and even the casual observer on the street must recognize the same condition with no little concern.

It also often happens that pupils drop out of elementary or high school because they have lost interest through not understanding their work. It is likewise true that from the standpoints both of aptitude for work and of efficiency in making use of common practical processes, business men are far from satisfied with the product of the schools. Frequently parents who try to help backward children, become discouraged and give up the attempt because methods have changed so greatly that they do not understand the "*teacher's way*" of doing things.

From all these considerations it follows that many parents should better understand the true aims of education and the methods of instruction now prevalent in schools. That they should also co-operate more intelligently with teachers in the work of training their children is equally plain.

"A Parent's Job" has been prepared to aid in accomplishing these two most desirable ends. If it succeeds even in a moderate degree, and thus helps to make

## PREFACE

---

the work of the noble, devoted women in our public schools more pleasant and effective, the author will feel well repaid for the time and effort expended in its preparation.



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I SLIPPING RESPONSIBILITY ON THE SCHOOLS	1
II DISPLACING THE IDOL OF PERCENTAGES .	9
III HABITS OF ADDRESS THAT HOME AND SCHOOL SHOULD CO-OPERATE TO FORM	23
IV HABITS OF WORK THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO EFFICIENCY . . . . .	33
V SOME ESSENTIAL HABITS OF CHARACTER .	45
VI HEALTH HABITS THAT ARE VITAL TO EFFICIENT LIVING . . . . .	69
VII HOME EDUCATION PRIOR TO ENTERING SCHOOL . . . . .	99
VIII THE FIRST THREE GRADES OF SCHOOL .	110
IX HOME CO-OPERATION IN THE FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH YEARS OF SCHOOL .	160
X CO-OPERATION IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES, AND IN FIRST YEAR HIGH SCHOOL . . . . .	189
XI NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS . . . . .	217



# A PARENT'S JOB

## CHAPTER I

### SLIPPING RESPONSIBILITY ON THE SCHOOLS

**N**OTHING makes a stronger appeal for our loving protection than a tiny, helpless babe, toddling about the house and winning all hearts with its sweet smiles and pretty ways. Its every sign of growing intelligence is watched with deepest interest, the entire family uniting to encourage or repress its budding instincts, as may seem best. Tenderly and hopefully fond parents talk over the little one's future, and earnestly resolve to make its life full of happy usefulness.

During the climbing, clattering, clamoring period which follows, however, little folk do not appeal so strongly to the interest of their elders. With a sigh of relief they are often sent to Primary School, as soon as the law permits, and to church on Sundays, if a convenient one is available. In the remaining daylight hours, their training is often too largely left to chance,—many parents apparently having implicit confidence in the old tradition that Providence

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

especially guides and watches over children and other irresponsible persons.

Nevertheless, some decades past, most parents had a far larger share in the education of their children. Mothers carefully taught their daughters sewing, cooking, and various other domestic duties, and would have regarded it a serious reflection on themselves, if their girls had married without a good working knowledge of these essentials. Boys had a daily round of chores about the premises, helped in useful ways in their father's business or trade, and were expected to perform speedily and well whatever tasks were assigned them. Work before play was an established rule of the home, and poor workmanship was not accepted. Carelessness in speech was considered neither dignified nor self-respecting, and slang and profanity were sternly rebuked.

The idea that a penny saved is a penny earned, and the wisdom of laying aside a nest egg for a rainy day, were inculcated almost from babyhood. Indeed, in those economical times, Fourth of July, the Circus, and Christmas were about the only spending days for children — days anticipated months ahead and enjoyed to the full. Early to bed and early to rise, a maxim applied in a reasonable degree by the entire family, was so fixed a rule for young folk that late hours



## SLIPPING RESPONSIBILITY

---

at home or an evening out for entertainment was an event long remembered. Children ate what was set before them without demurring, for the leavings, if there chanced to be any on their plates, were sure to appear for their first course next meal; and the rule that little folk should be seen and not heard was strictly enforced, especially while dining.

Respect for older people, without regard to dress or station, and for authority, wherever lodged, together with reverence for God and His church, were foundation principles of that former day home. Most remarkable of all, perhaps, in contrast with present times, instant and constant obedience was rigorously exacted from babyhood until the ancestral roof was no longer claimed as home, and Solomon's well-known advice as to sparing the rod and spoiling the child was one of the scriptural injunctions most religiously followed in the family. In short, hard work, simple living, obedience, respect, and reverence were the guiding stars of youth to home-keeping and good citizenship.

It is interesting to note how many of these practices, formerly regarded by parents as their "bounden duty" in bringing up children, have either become little used, or have slipped bodily over into the realm of the public school. Any duties children may have in many homes to-day, instead of having

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

precedence over play, are quite likely to come in for the last and shortest innings. Few girls are now taught sewing and cooking by their mothers, but good courses in both are available in the schools of many cities. At the present time it is quite exceptional for boys to have daily home duties which must be performed with reasonable swiftness and efficiency; but in many schools manual training shops afford opportunity for getting acquainted with tools and gaining facility in their use.

Judging by the frequent recurrence of *guy*, *peach*, *swell*, and numerous similar expressions in the vocabulary of children, there is no longer great objection to the use of slang in many homes. Along with the ever increasing cost of living and the mad scramble of parents for fine clothes, automobiles, and similar extravagances, every day is now a spending day for children, — a fact to which the corner stores and nickel-shows bear indisputable witness. In fact, the public school with its occasional penny savings bank system seems to be about the only check to this Niagara whirlpool of expenditure. As to early retiring for children, a visit to the "movies," vaudeville, and other places of amusement will readily disclose into what innocuous desuetude that time-honored practice has fallen.

## SLIPPING RESPONSIBILITY

---

The natural sequence to this combination of lapses is too many nervous children,—children who cannot be strictly held to any standard or régime, and who follow more or less their own sweet will in what they do and say. The claim is not made that every thing pertaining to the home training of children in the times referred to was perfect, nor that all is unworthy of praise to-day. Indeed, the methods of our forefathers were too likely to be of the rule or ruin type, and there was little or no differentiation in management, no matter how much children might differ in temperament. Besides, there were exceptions to the general rule then, just as there are now.

It is true, however, that the ideals as to hard work, early hours, thrift, personal dignity, obedience, respect, and reverence, by which parents were formerly guided in bringing up their children, tended to produce an industrious, self-reliant, self-respecting, law-abiding nation; while, to say the least, the more or less wide departure from those sturdy, wholesome standards, forebodes no improvement in the future citizenship of our country. Nevertheless, with the more attractive, better constructed school buildings, more practical curriculum, and more interesting teaching; with the far more widespread knowledge of hygiene

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

and prevention of disease, and with the increasingly deep interest in child welfare throughout our country, the babe of to-day should have a far better chance for all-round healthful development than ever before.

This chance, however, must necessarily depend, to a large extent, upon the intelligence, perseverance, and faithfulness of parents and teachers in squaring the training of their little charges by the rugged ideals previously mentioned herein. The school can and will continue cheerfully to teach domestic sciences, manual training, and other features of life's preparation formerly left entirely to the home, because the numerous changes that have taken place in household environment during the past few decades make the class room the most practical place for efficient instruction in those lines. Teachers should not, however, be compelled to deal with children who at home are cultivating no appetite for hard work and responsibility, and whose consuming idea of life is to have good times in the easiest possible way, regardless of the rights and feelings of anyone who happens to retard or block the attainment of that end. In these respects, parents must return to the sturdier ideals of their fathers, and the sooner there is a strong, united, persistent effort in that direction, the better it will be for all concerned.

## SLIPPING RESPONSIBILITY

---

First of all, fathers and mothers must realize that carrying out the fond resolutions with reference to the future of the crowing infant is no cursory, by-the-way undertaking; but an obligation that requires infinite wisdom, vigilance, patience, and perseverance,—a job for a genuine man and a true woman,—in fact, the most sacred duty of parenthood. Unlike prayer meeting or the club, it cannot be more or less successfully undertaken by one parent without the other. Frequent consultation, hearty co-operation, and the most intelligent team work are essential to the best results.

The fact that the child is naturally disobedient, dull, unattractive, or inclined to degeneracy, instead of lessening, increases the responsibility of parents. A teacher who would try to ignore or eliminate a child because it is dull or troublesome, would not be, to say the least, a credit to his profession. Such a child challenges the best that is in an instructor. One by one the various resources at his command are brought to bear on the case, and the more protracted the effort, the greater the satisfaction taken in the ultimate success, since victory in such a test of professional skill gives the keenest possible pleasure. Surely parents should manifest a similarly high professional spirit in dealing with their own children of the

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

type described; but with vastly greater zeal and patience, since there is so much more at stake for them than there can possibly be for the teacher.

With mallet and chisel, or with brush and color, the sculptor or artist labors patiently and enthusiastically for years to produce his ideal statue or picture; yet, no matter how perfect, the result at the best can be only cold marble or lifeless canvas. How much more absorbing and self-satisfying is the work of parents and teachers who with similar skill and perseverance fashion the plastic child! And how much greater pride and delight they may well take in the finished product,—the living, breathing man or woman,—strong and splendid in the truest and best sense of the words!

Realizing, then, that in the training of our children we have an obligation which demands our best judgment and effort and may produce results fraught with the deepest and most abiding satisfaction, we shall now consider some of the ideals to be kept in mind in connection with this important work, and the best and most practical means by which they may be accomplished.

## CHAPTER II

### DISPLACING THE IDOL OF PERCENTAGES

**T**HE great barrier in the way of intelligent co-operation of parents and teachers in the education of children is examination percentages. This idol must be displaced, — aye, shattered and relegated to the rear, before home and school will work together with understanding and sympathy for the highest and best interests of the young folk whose destinies they so largely determine.

It is customary for teachers to send home monthly report cards on which are noted the standings of pupils in various studies; and by these parents are supposed to keep in touch with what their children are doing in school. As a rule the standings on these cards are based upon monthly written tests; sometimes on written examinations covering a term or a year, — all of them, to a very large extent, tests of memory. If pupils remember fairly well, they may apply themselves very little to the daily work, and yet make a reasonably good showing on the test; they may grossly neglect regular school duties, and still, by a few hours of industrious cramming just preceding the examination,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

land creditably in class records; dishonest pupils may copy enough from the papers of better prepared classmates to gain a passing mark.

Nevertheless, since promotions depend so largely upon examination standings, the latter naturally loom up on the school horizon to pupils, parents, and sometimes even to teachers, as the great end and aim of education.

The pupil is jubilant over receiving a passing mark, especially in a final test. How he obtained the standing, or what real love for or understanding of the subject he may possess, is to him of little consequence. It is sufficient that he has passed.

Parents, as a rule, pay little attention to their children's work in school until the marks drop below the passing standard. Then they intercede vigorously to have the standings raised to the requisite passing mark, the fact that the child has not made honest effort, or has failed to gain the foundation knowledge or facility for the work of the higher class being apparently not taken into consideration. That Charles, James, Mary, or Elizabeth should be promoted, seems to be the only question troubling the parental mind.

Some teachers take great pride in the fact that all of their pupils pass, rating their



## PERCENTAGES

---

own ability and that of their colleagues by class averages in examination, with little or no thought as to whether the habits of work of the young folk under their charge have improved, or as to the strength or weakness pupils may show in the next higher class after the long vacation. Such standards put a premium upon lazy and neglectful habits; they are largely responsible for the inaccurate, unsatisfactory product which the schools send to business men, and therefore cannot be too quickly discontinued.

Even if receiving passing marks in examinations were synonymous with having acquired and retained book information, the standards would still be far from the best. One of the primary aims of education is to make pupils self-supporting. When, after leaving school, a young man tries to secure a position, no prospective employer asks him to locate Mt. Popocatepetl, to raise  $a-b$  to the  $n$ th power, or to conjugate a verb. Neat appearance, pleasing manners, legible penmanship, and ability to write a good letter do help to secure the desired place. Habits of continuous application to the business in hand, neatness, promptness, swiftness, self-reliance, good health, and sterling character, not book information, will insure continuance and promotion. In failing more strongly to emphasize these

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

important habits of work, health and character, our present system of education is inexcusably lacking in its most fundamental essentials.

Making percentages the basis of promotions is likewise a poor plan, because it places a premium upon being able to do things well under the spur of special pressure, instead of upon forming the habit of doing them efficiently at all times. For example, take the study of English Composition. Pupils are promoted if they can attain 75%, more or less, in facility of expression, punctuation, and grammar. Many do succeed in passing the various tests creditably, but signally fail to continue applying the information gained, since there is no special stimulus for so doing.

Conspicuous proof of a widespread weakness in the teaching of English composition was shown in an experiment tried, a time ago, by one of our widely read monthly periodicals. The enterprising editor sent a circular letter to all members of the graduating classes of several of the leading colleges for girls, requesting each to write an opinion of the value of higher training for women. The numerous answers received were carefully corrected with reference to punctuation, spelling, and English; and the summary of the results, which was later published, was

## PERCENTAGES

---

almost unbelievable. Yet this poor showing did not prove that these young ladies had not learned to spell and compose well. It simply demonstrated most glaringly that they had not formed correct habits in these respects. If the editor had given due warning that the replies would be critically examined, and a summary of the results published, the answers received would no doubt have been creditable.

It is well to know how to enunciate and to pronounce correctly, but having the correct habit in both is the thing that counts. It is worth while to be able to use a pen skilfully, when one especially tries, but to have the habit of neat, legible penmanship at all times is far better. To be able to pass an examination on healthful position, deep breathing, and the proper mastication of food is creditable, but to have correct habits in all of these vital functions is absolutely essential to the most efficient living. To sum it all up, our present scheme of education places far too much emphasis upon remembering subject matter, and far too little upon habits of work and habits of use; and the fact is indisputable that shifting the emphasis to the formation of correct habits, utilizing the subjects studied as a means to this end, will vastly improve the product turned out by the schools.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Instead of having the monthly report cards of pupils tell their standings in reading, arithmetic, geography, and the other subjects taught, let there be noted on them vital points under the headings, Studies, Habits of Address, Habits of Work, Habits of Health, and Habits of Character, holding up habit-formation as the great thing for which to strive from the beginning to the end of the school course, and making examinations just as incidental a part of the school régime as is the daily recitation.

Under Studies, the trifling fact that Jack or Florence or Sallie or Sam is one per cent, more or less, higher or lower than during the preceding month, — information which any thoughtful teacher will agree not only is of little consequence, but also is largely guess work, — should not be included. Indeed, a study need not be mentioned at all, unless there is some important topic or principle in which the pupil should have help at home, because he has failed to understand it as well as the majority of his classmates. In cases of special weakness, the fact that a pupil needs daily home-practice during the year in reading aloud, penmanship, or in whatever subject his chief defects may lie, should be noted on the report the first month, and occasional comments with reference to

## PERCENTAGES

---

his improvement or lack of growth in these respects should be made.

Under Habits of Address, personal appearance, voice, manners, and conversation should be included, since correct habits in all of these particulars count so much toward success and happiness in life. Personal appearance will naturally include bodily cleanliness, good taste in wearing apparel, and tidiness in caring for the hair, nose, teeth, nails, and shoes; while pleasing, well-modulated tones and gracious, deferential politeness will be the points most worth while under voice and manners.

Such important characteristics as concentration, promptness, industry, neatness, rapidity, accuracy, thoroughness, and self-reliance will naturally come under Habits of Work.

Sitting and standing position, breathing, lung expansion, and care of the eyes and ears are the particulars pertaining to Health Habits that can be most readily observed in school. However, if teachers or medical inspectors notice any other vital points such as exercise, rest, diet, or the elimination of waste, in which children seem to be forming incorrect habits, co-operation with the parents for improving the same should be proffered.

As to Habits of Character, obedience,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

truthfulness, honesty, appreciation, modesty, fidelity, respect, and reverence are the chief points to be considered, though any other item which parents or teachers might regard as especially valuable for a particular child should be included.

"But this plan involves altogether too many details for a teacher to keep in mind; there would not be time," one might conclude.

That would be true, if all items under each heading or sub-heading were to be considered every month; but such is not the intention. Ordinarily the blank form would contain the five headings, Studies, Habits of Address, Habits of Work, Habits of Health, Habits of Character. If the pupil should be satisfactory in all particulars, no comment whatever would need to be made. If, for instance, he is unsatisfactory in penmanship, has not grasped multiplication of fractions, is dilatory in performing his work, is showing too little industry, is incorrect in sitting or standing position, or shows a tendency to untruthfulness or cheating, the fact or facts under each heading that the teacher might consider the most vital will be reported. Where a child shows weakness in many particulars, better results will be accomplished by concentrating upon one or two habits until they are fairly well started before

## PERCENTAGES

---

taking up others. For example, Spelling, Application, Breathing Habit, and Obedience might, one or all of them, be the item or items to be kept continuously in the foreground until a more satisfactory habit is established, when attention should be directed to the next most vital points for the child in question. This plan will of course require careful study of individual pupils; but it is in such differentiation that the highest skill of teachers is manifested and their greatest enjoyment experienced. Besides, the additional time needed for intelligent consideration of individual pupils will be more than counterbalanced by the hours of computing percentages which will be eliminated under the proposed plan.

The objection might also be raised that the plan suggested is such a radical departure from the one in vogue that parents will not understand or approve it; and that many of them may have little or no comprehension or appreciation of the significance of some of the items.

The latter fact is no doubt true; but it is likewise equally certain that parents who do not comprehend or appreciate the vital points which have been enumerated cannot too quickly learn to do so, and that there is no quicker or surer way to bring about such an understanding than to use the suggested

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

headings on the school reports of their children.

The argument might also be advanced that notations on the report with reference to Health or Character Habits, would expose children to the ridicule of their classmates.

This might follow if, as at present, the same card were to be used an entire term, and frequently left on the desk of the teacher or the pupil, subject to inspection by anyone who might happen to handle it. However, the fact should be considered that not only the contents, but also the form and very likely the material of the report would be changed. Instead of being a continuous record of percentages on durable cardboard, which is sent back and forth between school and home an entire term, it would be a monthly statement from teacher to parents like the following:

No. 52 School, Buffalo, N. Y., September, 1917.

Monthly Statement to Parents Concerning George H. Jones, a Pupil of the 7th Grade, for Sept., 1917.

*Studies.* He will need daily practice in penmanship at home throughout the year. Has not understood Multiplication of Fractions.

*Habits of Address.* His tone of voice in conversation is too loud. Untidy in the care of hair and nails.

*Habits of Work.* Does not apply himself. Lacks in-



## PERCENTAGES

---

dustry. Written work is not neat and well arranged.

*Habits of Health.* His sitting position is not good. He must form the habit of erect position, or faulty breathing and poor health will result. His eyes do not seem strong. Better consult an oculist.

*Habits of Character.* Is inclined to copy home lessons of other pupils.

(Signed) CLARA L. CARR, *Teacher.*

*Explanations.* Important facts concerning pupil's lack of progress in subjects studied will be reported under *Studies.*

*Habits of Address* include Personal Appearance, Voice, Manners and Conversation.

*Habits of Work* — Concentration, Promptness, Industry, Neatness, Rapidity, Accuracy, Thoroughness and Self-reliance.

*Habits of Health* — Bodily Position, Breathing, Chest Expansion, Eyes and Ears.

*Habits of Character* — Obedience, Truthfulness, Honesty, Modesty, Fidelity, Respect and Reverence.

---

(Tear off here)

To CLARA L. CARR,

Teacher, 7th Grade, No. 52 School, Buffalo, N.Y.

I have read your September Statement, and shall be pleased to co-operate in securing the desired improvement.

(Signed) CHARLES W. JONES, *Parent.*

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

“Without a permanent card giving percentages, who could ever tell whether our children should be promoted or not, and how could their relative rank in the class be determined?” parents might inquire.

Teachers would send on to the next higher grade pupils whose knowledge and habits of work fitted them for promotion, and those who were advanced would be allowed to continue in the higher class, if their work during the first month of the succeeding term should show the requisite capability.

If for any reason a list of pupils with relative rank should be necessary, it could be made by the teacher just as readily and accurately as it can under the present plan, with the additional advantage that pupils whose memory is good, but whose habits of address, work, health, and character are not improving, will not be rated as high as classmates with less facility in remembering, who are showing greater improvement in the essential particulars mentioned.

Upon first inspecting the proposed report, a casual observer may think that, except incidentally, habits of address, health, and character are strictly within the home environment, while all that pertains to studies and habits of work belongs to the confines of the school. Indeed this is practically the status more or less generally existing to-day;

## PERCENTAGES

---

and while many pupils do develop well along all of the lines enumerated without especial emphasis being placed upon them at school, the result is usually in a great measure due to excellent home environment.

As a matter of course, a greatly improved product is sure to result from closer co-operation between the home and the school along all of the lines enumerated. In the first place the plan will compel both parents and teachers to consider these vital points seriously with reference to each child at least once a month during the school year, which is in itself most valuable. Then, too, children may be little impressed with what is said to them at home concerning voice, manners, personal cleanliness, breathing habit, or truthfulness; but these criticisms will make a greater impression if they are also emphasized at school. Likewise, the teacher's criticisms of lack of application, neatness, penmanship and similar points have added force when those at home join heartily in urging improvement along the same lines.

The greatest essential in carrying out such a plan as the one proposed is a closer acquaintance between parents and teachers. And why not? Teachers are devoting their time and effort to the work of instructing children. The better the product the schools

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

turn out, the keener will be the enjoyment and satisfaction of those who do its work; and so it naturally follows that instructors are vitally interested in having their efforts supplemented at home in the most intelligent manner possible.

No matter how vast the wealth parents may have invested in any business, they possess no investment so full of possibilities for rich returns in the way of future enjoyment and satisfaction as are their children. Naturally, then, the school in which these little ones are being trained for happy, successful living is the enterprise in which their deepest interest should lie, and the teachers of their children are the business partners with whom fathers and mothers should have the most cordial and intelligent relations.

May the day hasten when autocratic teachers who regard the parents of their pupils as meddlers, and tax-paying parents who look down upon the teachers of their children as unfortunate individuals compelled to work for a living, will be a relic of the past. The best way to bring about this state of affairs is to displace the idol of percentages by the use of aims and ideals that will appeal both to home and to school as vital and worth while.

## CHAPTER III

### HABITS OF ADDRESS THAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD CO-OPERATE TO FORM

**W**E sometimes hear a person spoken of as a man of fine address, and the inference from such a remark is that his appearance, voice, manners, conversation, and personality all combine to win the favorable attention of those whom he meets. Some have had pleasing habits of address from childhood. Others have cultivated them only after observation and perhaps mortifying experiences have demonstrated their value. Home is naturally thought of as their chief source of culture; yet it certainly is not the only factor, nor is it always an effective one, since one child of a family will be very happy in his manner of meeting people, while another will be quite the opposite. Although schools, with their cultural environment, are undoubtedly a strong influence in moulding such habits, they are certainly not always a compelling force, for plenty of college graduates are notably lacking in this respect, while persons with little schooling are sometimes especially gifted.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Some will assert that tactful, pleasing address is an inborn quality; while others will just as earnestly argue that close association with a person of culture is the deciding factor.

Two points upon which all will heartily agree, however, are that such habits have altogether too much bearing on success and happiness in life to be left to luck or chance; and that a plan which is likely to keep their value fresh in the minds of young people is well worth a trial.

Including Habits of Address on school report cards will emphasize their practical value to teachers and parents, as well as to children. Having teachers note thereon, from time to time, their observations as to the improvement, or lack of growth, pupils show in these respects, will also serve to keep attention focussed upon the importance of attaining them. This plan does not involve the introduction of a new subject into the school curriculum, nor the study of a special text-book. Nevertheless it should make teachers and parents more systematic and definite in their efforts to improve children along these lines; and it should likewise prompt them to utilize many opportunities which are frequently allowed to pass unimproved.

For instance, even little children in the Kindergarten should be led to sense the

## HABITS OF ADDRESS

---

charm of a pleasing voice, and this ideal should be held up in connection with both music and reading instruction throughout the grades. What evidence of refinement a pleasing voice is! How much it helps, not only in making a good first impression, but also in constantly keeping us more agreeable to friends and acquaintances! How many fine, capable people are far less attractive and effective in their work than they otherwise would be, simply on account of too loud or too nasal tones! Pleasing, well modulated tones of voice are largely a matter of habit. Since lack of this desirable characteristic is so widespread in our land, it is time that home and school should work together more intelligently to cultivate it.

In the plastic period of the primary grades, what a privilege it is for teachers to lay the foundation for the ideals expressed in the following lines:—

“Hearts, like doors, open with ease  
To very tiny keys;  
And don't forget that some of these  
Are *Thank You, Sir, and If You Please.*”

“No one can measure the power of a smile,  
It makes the way shorter by many a mile.”

“A happy smile, like a magic wand,  
Will open every heart;  
A gracious way in what we do and say  
Is childhood's happiest art.”

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

"It is all very well to be happy  
When life flows on like a song;  
But the man worth while  
Is one who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong."

"If you think you've missed the mark,  
Use a smile;  
If your life seems in the dark,  
Why, just smile.  
Don't give up in any fight;  
There's a coming day that's bright,  
There's a dawn beyond the night,  
If you smile."

"Politeness is to do and say  
The *Kindest Thing* in the *Kindest Way*."

"Kind hearts are more than coronets  
And simple faith than Norman blood."

These lines, or others of a similar character, should be memorized in the First and Second Grades, often repeated thereafter throughout the elementary school, and daily applied as standards. The best ingenuity and endeavor of teachers should be used to make the ideals they express a part of the very warp and woof of the minds and hearts of their pupils.

The following poem should be memorized in the Third Grade, or, perhaps better, in the Second, and frequently recited and discussed in the succeeding years:—



## HABITS OF ADDRESS

---

### LET US SMILE<sup>1</sup>

"The thing that goes the farthest toward making life  
worth while,  
That costs the least and does the most, is just a  
pleasant smile;  
The smile that bubbles from the heart, that loves its  
fellow-men  
Will drive away the cloud of gloom and coax the sun  
again.  
It's full of worth and goodness, too, with manly  
kindness blent,  
It's worth a million dollars, and it doesn't cost a cent.  
There is no room for sadness when we see a cheery  
smile;  
It always has the same good look, — it's never out  
of style;  
It nerves us on to try again, when failure makes us  
blue;  
The dimples of encouragement are good for me and you.  
It pays a higher interest, for it is merely lent;  
It's worth a million dollars, and doesn't cost a cent."  
A smile comes very easy, — you can wrinkle up with  
cheer  
A hundred times more quickly than you can shed a  
tear.  
It ripples out, moreover, to the heartstrings that will  
tug,  
And always leaves an echo that is very like a hug.  
So smile away. Folk understand what by a smile is  
meant;  
It's worth a million dollars, and doesn't cost a cent."  
— *Baltimore American.*

<sup>1</sup> From *The Bright Side*, by Hon. Charles R. Skinner. Reprinted by permission of Frank D. Beattys & Company, Publishers.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Surely the occasional tactful introduction of one of these optimistic rhymes, either for a class or for an individual, at just the right time and place, should be a great help in forming the habit of a *smile* and a *please* with every request, a gracious acknowledgment and a heartfelt "*Thank you*" for every favor, no matter how small. The next and most important step is to make young folk realize that back of all true politeness is the Christ-like spirit of unselfish service. Such organizations as the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls, with their commendable ideals of service and efficiency, are helpful allies of parents and teachers in establishing this ideal.

Who can estimate the power of the habit of gracious deference? Who can compute the value of a smile? What a wonderful talisman each is in winning and holding interest and friendship! Neither is necessarily the possession only of those who are so fortunate as to be born with unusually happy dispositions; but, like all other habits, both may be cultivated, if children are persistently made to realize the value of pleasing manners in winning the truest happiness and success.

Very early in the grades, children learn that certain colors look well together in their drawings, and that others do not. They are also told in simple talks on hygiene that

## HABITS OF ADDRESS

---

cleanliness is next to godliness, and that clothing should allow the muscles of the body perfect freedom. In correlation with such facts, it is possible to lay a foundation for the standards that clothes should be comfortable and healthful; that simplicity is the best taste; that the few colors worn at one time should harmonize; that mended clothing is not bad form, if the repairing is neatly done; and that soiled or unclean clothes, no matter how costly, are never good form.

Probably most of the points that have been mentioned, as well as the requisite information in regard to caring for the hair and keeping the nose, teeth, nails, and shoes clean, have for years past been well taught by many teachers of the Primary and Intermediate Grades. The failure has been in placing too little emphasis on forming the habits, and in having too little team work of parents and teachers in keeping the attention of young folk riveted upon the need until the desired habit is formed.

On the subject of conversation, very little should be said to children, until they are about ten years old. At that time attention may be tactfully called to the value of being able to introduce a sensible topic of conversation, and likewise of continuing the talk on a subject introduced by some one else. How to be a good listener — an art, by the way,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

that many folk have never learned — should be explained and its importance impressed. Gaining facility in conversation, like other points in this chapter, is primarily a feature of home training. Yet the fact that teachers occasionally refer to the subject in brief morning exercises and that they at other opportune times, now and then, speak to pupils privately about it, and sometimes note their growth or lack of progress in this particular on the monthly report cards, is sure to count largely toward its attainment.

A point to be kept in mind in dealing with children is that they are wonderfully impressionable. Even a suggestion from a tactful teacher, especially from one whom a pupil admires and respects, is often sufficient to establish the formation of a desired habit. A friend of mine who has excellent teeth attributes this possession largely to the fact that in his fourteenth year a teacher whom he liked inquired how he kept them so fine. As a matter of fact, up to that particular moment there was no explanation for their quality, except that like Topsy they had "just growed" that way. That very day, however, the lad invested in dental floss, brush and tooth powder, and during the years that have intervened has probably never failed to give his teeth a thorough cleaning before going to bed at night. Proud

## HABITS OF ADDRESS

---

of the fact that someone whom he respected had admired his teeth, he was stimulated to keep them in a condition that would always merit the good opinion of others.

Another strong argument for the closer co-operation of parents and teachers along the lines suggested is that habits formed in childhood become just as natural to a person as sleeping or waking; and that bad habits stick just as fast as good ones. No matter how much one may wish to change a habit which he has discovered is not in accordance with refined standards, the old way is likely to crop out to his own confusion and regret or to that of someone who is deeply interested in him.

How many of us know persons who are careless in some such personal refinement as the care of the nails, teeth, or clothing, or are crude in some other particular, not because they fail to realize its value now, but for the reason that the wrong habit, which was formed in childhood, persists in asserting itself. Psychologists claim that many of the most vital personal habits are formed before the teens are reached. How regrettable it is, then, that teachers are required to spend time in communicating to parents the trivial information that their children are a few percent higher or lower in the various studies pursued, while the vital

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

habits which count so much towards future comfort, happiness and success are allowed to pass without consideration.

A minister who chanced to call on a business man while some high school lads were applying for a position, expressed surprise that his host engaged the one who was most humbly dressed and had no recommendations. "Oh, he had recommendations!" replied the keen man of affairs, "and far better than the others, since they were not in an envelope. Though his clothes were a little worn, they were very neat, and the same tidiness was evident in every part of his person. He waited quietly for his turn, while the others meddled impatiently with everything within reach. He smiled frankly, looked me in the eyes, and answered intelligently when I engaged him in conversation, while the other applicants were ill at ease. He quickly picked up the papers which the stenographer clumsily dropped without showing any amusement; and he was far more interested in the work and the opportunities for advancement than in the amount of pay or the length of hours. I do not care for better recommendations than these. Do you?"

## CHAPTER IV

### HABITS OF WORK THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO EFFICIENCY

**P**ROMPTNESS in getting at the work in hand is one of the habits that should first enlist the co-operation of parents and teachers in training children, for the fact that a task is work and must be done seems to make almost anything else more attractive. "Just for a few moments" the other thing is indulged in; somehow the proposed "few minutes" expand into many, with the result that the work is often put off until too late for anything more than a pretense of doing it.

From the moment a child has a definite duty to perform, that should be placed first on his program. He should be made to understand clearly that the game, the other work, or whatever the counter-attraction happens to be, will surely prove more enjoyable if undertaken after his mind is free concerning the thing which must be done; that far keener pleasure attends the work when time permits a businesslike, ship-shape job; and that the anticipated greater fun from the substitute occupation is sure

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

to be more than offset by the chagrin attending a poorly finished task.

This sounds like preaching, and will amount to little more if the curtain is allowed to fall with words alone; but parents and teachers must see to it that the most important part of the drama, the translation of the words into realities, relentlessly follows. When such a plan is conscientiously and persistently followed, the desired habit should be the sequel.

Closely allied with promptness in attacking work is the ability to apply one's mind to the task in hand and to keep at it with intelligence and earnestness until the finish,—or, in other words, CONCENTRATION. This is the habit of work which probably counts more than any other toward efficiency and success. Young children naturally possess very little power in this respect. They begin some work enthusiastically, maybe; but soon relapse into dreaminess, or their minds and fingers fly to a new something, which, for the time being, makes a stronger appeal. The task assigned may be entirely neglected, or they flit back and forth from it to the diverting attractions,—with the same result in each case,—namely, little or nothing accomplished.

Earnest effort should be made to have children gain the habit of concentration.



## HABITS OF WORK

---

First of all, little folk, both at home and in school, should be given only work that is within their capability, and the directions should be so clear that they will know exactly what is to be done. The conditions should be made as favorable as possible in the beginning; minimum opportunity for dawdling should be permitted, and tendencies in that direction should be religiously frowned upon. The great practical value of keeping one's mind on the work in hand should be emphasized; a time limit should often be set for a task, and where a child has work of about the same difficulty, at regular intervals for some length of time, the liberal period allowed at first should be gradually decreased, care being taken, however, to see that the standard of his product steadily improves.

Even a slight gain in ability to concentrate should be heartily commended, and sometimes rewarded. As facility is developed, the surrounding conditions should be made less favorable, since, in later years, it may often be necessary to apply one's mind closely to work in a distracting environment. Finally, intelligent and persistent co-operation between home and school should be kept up until the habit of concentrating on the work in hand is well formed. At first thought one might exclaim,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

"How ridiculous to talk to young folk about concentration! Have not parents and teachers enough to do in helping children learn lessons, without troubling their heads with such big words?" "A rose by any other name will smell as sweet." So the idea of applying one's mind to the work in hand, and sticking to it until it is well done, will be just as effective by whatever name expressed. Incidentally, too, there is no better way to help children learn lessons than to teach them to concentrate.

It is indeed most unfortunate that primary grade teachers often have such large classes that in the "Busy Work" periods, at least, they cannot readily keep in touch with what their pupils are doing; and so in this critical, formative period, dawdling habits are formed, instead of those that make for efficiency. With such large classes, it is far better to have part attend school in the morning and the rest of the class in the afternoon, for then teachers are able to give sufficient direction and supervision to prevent such lapses.

Another habit of work that should be zealously inculcated in early childhood is NEATNESS, and by this is meant not only cleanliness and freedom from soiling, but also orderly arrangement and all other elements of appearance that constitute a ship-

## HABITS OF WORK

---

shape job. Teachers in the lower grades sometimes speak of certain pupils as naturally neat or dainty. In the opinion of the author, however, such children were probably born with the same instincts, as far as untidiness and lack of order are concerned, that other infants possess, but were fortunate in having mothers whose dainty personality early impressed itself upon them. The remarkable influence of early impressions is one of the chief reasons why parents should begin training their children in neatness at the earliest possible moment. As soon as little folk can understand, they should be made to put up their playthings and clothing in an orderly way. Personal cleanliness should be persistently urged; *slovenly results* in any work should not be accepted from them; and, no matter how small the task assigned, they should daily be encouraged to take pride in a shipshape product and to feel keen chagrin at every failure to attain such a result.

The rapidity with which children will form neat, orderly habits of work when these few sensible rules are applied is most gratifying. The tenacity with which untidy and disorderly habits will cling through the elementary grades, high school, and college, if intelligent, concerted action to repress them is not taken at an early period, would be

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

almost unbelievable if there were not so many living proofs of it. The fact that some distinguished men have not been neat and orderly in their habits of work is occasionally cited in extenuation of the failing; but this is begging the question. Instead of being a sign of genius, such laxity is unquestionable evidence of defective early training. Of course no one can prove that Horace Greeley would have been a more successful editor of the *New York Tribune* had he possessed the habit of legible penmanship, or that Coleridge, or other men of genius sometimes mentioned in this connection, would have become more luminous stars in the firmament of fame had their methods of work been more orderly and business-like; but that all would have achieved higher efficiency, and been spared much personal chagrin, is altogether probable.

ACCURACY is a habit of work usually resulting from concentration, but it should nevertheless receive especial attention itself. As soon as children are old enough to appreciate the facts, they should be frequently told how much exactness counts in mechanics and in business, and that *nearly* or *almost* right will not do in those realms, but *absolutely correct* alone passes. They should also be encouraged to find and discuss illustrations of such facts. Manifestations of

## HABITS OF WORK

---

accuracy should be heartily commended, and evidences of the opposite tendency even more earnestly discouraged. The chief thing, perhaps, is not to let little children be satisfied with incorrect results. Commendation and rewards can in this connection, as in all training of children, be used with good effect.

RAPIDITY is another habit likely to result from concentration, yet it is also one that parents should begin to cultivate at the earliest possible moment. If little folk are slow or dreamy in their movements, it should not be considered a childish trait which they will outgrow, but the beginning of a status that will continue indefinitely, unless nipped in the bud.

Everything possible should be done to make a child's ideal the swiftest action and quickest thinking compatible with neatness and accuracy. "Slow but sure" may be true of a certain type of mind, but as a rule quick thinking and accuracy go hand in hand. What was said under Concentration about the prevention of dawdling is applicable here, as is also the use of the time limit in assigning children's work. Healthful games requiring quickness of mind and body may also be employed with excellent effect in breaking up dawdling habits. We read of agricultural institutions that are training pupils to make two blades of grass grow

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

where but one is now produced, and we applaud this work since it means much for the future of our country. It is equally plain that if parents and teachers train children to increase their rapidity of thought and action, a corresponding gain in efficiency will result.

Anyone who can contrast the schools of thirty years ago with those of to-day is impressed with the great difference revealed in the matter of self-reliance and appetite for hard work, much, it is regrettable to admit, in favor of former-day instruction. The large majority of a class will generally do fairly well what a teacher has shown them, step by step; but if one new point, no matter how simple, is included, many pupils are likely to be floored. Ability to dig something out for themselves or keen delight in overcoming difficulties is too commonly lacking.

There are two causes for this condition. One, the lack of home duties, has been discussed in a preceding chapter. The other is that, in the revolt from former methods of teaching, the idea of making work interesting for children has been overdone. Kindergarten methods have been carried too far in the grades. Teachers are showing pupils how to do too many things that they, with reasonable application, might work out alone. Not being required to rely upon themselves,

## HABITS OF WORK

---

children naturally gain little self-reliance; having little or no practice in overcoming difficulties, it follows, as a matter of course, that no especial zeal in that direction is aroused.

Parents do not hold children accountable for many home duties, largely because it is often less trouble to do things themselves than to see to it that little folk do them satisfactorily. In many instances, too, fathers and mothers want their offspring to have an easier and pleasanter childhood than it was their privilege to enjoy, and freedom from home duties seems to be the most direct way to that end. Besides, their children may be taunted by playmates for doing what the maid or the hired man does in the house next door or across the street, and thus the family pride is hurt. The family pride that is really worth while, however, is that which parents may take in the strength and efficiency their children show when the real problems of life are encountered in later years. Therefore let there be regular home duties for young folk and let there be included now and then some that require reasonably prolonged effort and grit. Let the fact also be remembered that it is just as important to make a shipshape job of mowing the lawn or washing the dishes as of preparing a written arithmetic lesson,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

since one set of duties has just as much bearing on the matter of habit formation as the other.

On the school side, let teachers cease undue helping, and thus give pupils opportunity for more individual thinking and effort. Instead of minutely explaining the new step in the problems of to-morrow, let pupils experience the joy of first trying to think it out for themselves. In place of correcting and re-correcting the same points in composition, have children carefully inspect their own papers, or those of a classmate, to see how many mistakes they can find out themselves in a certain number of minutes. All these and other plans for developing judgment and self-reliance, which will be mentioned in greater detail in succeeding chapters, make for strength and ability.

From the beginning, respect for labor, no matter how humble, and disapproval of shirking and idleness, in whatsoever station found, should be earnestly fostered. The lines,

“ Easily gained things  
Are easily lost;  
That obtained without effort  
Is worth what it cost,”

make a very good motto for the first three grades. If the following poem is learned in the third or fourth grade, and frequently re-



## HABITS OF WORK

---

peated during the years that follow, it can be made an excellent help in establishing the right attitude toward hard work:

### IT COULDN'T BE DONE

"Somebody said, 'It couldn't be done,'  
But he, with a chuckle, replied,  
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one  
Not to say so, until he had tried.  
So he started right in, with the trace  
Of a grin on his face,  
If he worried, he hid it;  
And he started to sing, as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, —  
And he did it.

'Oh,' somebody scoffed, 'You couldn't do that!  
At least, no one ever has done it' —  
But he took off his coat, and he took off his hat,  
And before anyone knew, he'd begun it.  
With the trace of a grin, and a lift of the chin,  
Without any doubting or quitting,  
He started to sing, as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, —  
And he did it.

There are thousands to tell you, 'It couldn't be done,'  
There are thousands to prophesy failure,  
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,  
The dangers that wait to assail you;  
But start right in, with the trace of a grin,  
Take off your coat, and go to it;  
Just start to sing, as you tackle the thing  
That couldn't be done,  
And you'll do it."

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life," and "The Builders," Carlisle's "To-day," and many other poems, far superior to the above lines from a literary standpoint, are also excellent to use in fostering these ideals; but none appeal to children more effectively in securing results than the quaint stanzas quoted.

One of the remarkable things about the United States is the very large number of men who with little school education and without favorable home environment have achieved high distinction in the various callings of life. Chill penury compelled a self-reliance and an ability to overcome obstacles which more than made up for lack of school and home advantages. Not only must our children be taught to honor such men by celebrating their birthdays, but they must be made to realize that it was through doing hard things and overcoming difficulties that these men gained such great power for usefulness. By joining with teachers in implanting these sturdy ideals, parents may start their children in life's work, charged with the spirit, —

"Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait,"

## CHAPTER V

### SOME ESSENTIAL HABITS OF CHARACTER

**O**BEDIENCE is a characteristic that parents should cultivate in their children, since health, happiness, and even life itself may often be jeopardized by the lack of it. Its formation, too, is primarily the parents' job, and should not,—as unfortunately it often is,—be foisted upon teachers. That there has been a deplorable falling off in home discipline in recent years, teachers can bear indisputable witness; indeed, even in streets and other public places where children are wont to congregate, a casual observer will readily reach a similar conclusion. Ex-President William H. Taft, in an interesting and instructive article on "The College Slouch,"<sup>1</sup> says:

"One of the weaknesses of our present life is the fact that in the family and in the education that we give our children at home we coddle them. We permit them to take the line of least resistance. We let them study what they wish to study, and we are loth to force upon them the mental training that comes from their studying subjects

<sup>1</sup> Published in the May, 1914, number of the *Ladies' Home Journal*,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

knowledge of which they do not acquire easily or rapidly. We deny to our children the great and indispensable good that comes from discipline. Character is formed by the practice of self-restraint and self-sacrifice, by overcoming obstacles. Muscles are made useful by the constant training of them to the purposes to which they are ultimately to be devoted, and the same principle exactly applies to the development of the intelligence and to the building of the character of our boys. In this age, when we have had such great material growth and when so many have the means of making life easy for themselves, parents fall into the habit of letting children do about as they please and of taking no pains to see to it that their children are made to know that they have some duties, that they owe respect to the opinions and wishes of their parents, and that life is not all one sweet song.

“It is not an edifying sight in a public dining-room in a university town, which the families of the college boys frequent in their visits, to observe a fond father, mother and sister sit down to luncheon with a young hopeful whose dress and bearing indicate that he is in the college swim, and to note the fact that after one course he cannot restrain himself, but must have a cigarette and blow the smoke about to create an

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

atmosphere that his father and mother breathe with difficulty but think all right because their boy makes it. The very manner of holding the cigarette carries the indication of a lack of that respectful bearing that the boy ought to be taught to have and made to manifest. . . .

"This slouchy bearing is due to two causes. The first is the lack of discipline in the family, acquired before the student comes to college. I don't mean to say that the love of a boy for his parents is diminished, but the necessity for that respectful attitude toward them is much minimized by the fault of the parents themselves. . . . It is perhaps an exaggerated story, but it is told of a fond mother who wrote to the head of a school that she hoped her boy would not be disciplined too much, 'because,' she said, 'we never disciplined or punished him at home except in self-defense.'"

The first lesson in obedience should come to the uncrowned king of the nursery through the discovery that mother and other zealously devoted subjects cease rushing to the crib-side at his every beck and call. The afore-said innocent-looking ball of flesh and blood and cry, being—all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding—a despot of ultra imperious tendencies, lifts up his voice in rebellious lamentations at such *lese-majesty*

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

as long as lungs and throat can stand the strain, when, soothed by the magic influence of a tiny thumb, he drops off into dreamland, bearing a more or less indelible impression that he has not had his way. Then the fond mother, more troubled inwardly than the shrieking infant himself, travels by fast express to the realm of Morpheus, happy in the thought that self-control lasted long enough to let the wilful midget monarch cry it out.

Wise is the mother who, after satisfying herself that no reasonable cause for discomfort exists, maintains a spirit of firmness until complete conquest is made,—wise not only in sparing herself the frazzled nerves and dragged-out existence that accompany long-continued loss of sleep; but also in laying, thus early, an excellent foundation for the habit of obedience. The effort may cost many a hard wrench of the heart-strings, for colic, teeth, and divers other fancied ills will arise in imagination to accuse her, and the next-door neighbors may even fully concur in the accusation. Nevertheless, as vigorous crying is Nature's most effective agency in dispelling colic, so the gain in mother's poise and in the good behavior of the child will prove the best possible antidote for false impressions.

This well-begun process of curbing baby's

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

will must of course be continued wisely and persistently as the creeping and toddling stages come on, regardless of the fact that "He is so little," or "It is so cute." A smiling but firm "No," insisting upon rapid capitulation as to the point at issue, swift banishment to cribdom, or quickly applied, vigorous spanking in case of continued rebellious spirit, are the most successful tactics to employ. As the infant increases in age and stature, a concise statment of the *why* may be profitably added to the smiling but firm "No." The denial of a coveted privilege may also be substituted for banishment or whipping; but rarely, if ever, should the rapid surrender of the will, or a punishment commensurate with the offense, be omitted. From the outset, instant obedience, accompanied by a gracious, respectful spirit, should be the standard sought. If this policy is followed, ability to check self-will, respect for authority, and a teachable spirit will be so well established in children by the time school age is reached, that, greatly to the advantage of all concerned, little or no severe disciplining is likely to be necessary thereafter.

There are zealous students of child-study who most heartily disapprove of having disobedient or rebellious children capitulate, except through their own initiative, but advo-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

cate maintaining a cold exterior toward such offenders, for weeks if need be, until their error is voluntarily acknowledged; and under no circumstances would such advocates use corporal punishment.

At first thought these propositions seem plausible, but, like many other educational ideas apparently excellent in theory, they are altogether impracticable when put to the test. For instance, the assertion has been made that a child should never be required to learn what he does not fully comprehend. Following this theory, all but the very smallest numbers, division of fractions, ideas of the earth, mountains, and many other things now taught children would necessarily be postponed for years. Being essential to progress, these facts are presented in the lower grades, the full comprehension coming with maturer years. So the child who defers to the judgment of his elders, without being given all the time he wishes to reason out why, gains far more through forming the habit of prompt obedience than he can possibly lose by the repression of personal reasoning or initiative. Waiting for children voluntarily to acknowledge their fault is not practical because the great majority of parents have neither time nor patience to pursue such a course, and likewise because the products of this type of discipline



## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

do not, to say the least, justify the claims that have been made for it.

As to punishments, while denial of privileges, sentences to seclusion, and the like may often be fully sufficient, all will frequently be more effective if preceded by a spanking that smarts; and physical chastisement alone will oftentimes prove sufficiently effective with little children. Probably no utterance of Solomon can be more readily verified in actual life to-day, than that "Sparing the rod spoils the child." The opponents of corporal punishment make much of the point that whipping is usually done while angry. Why not? Should children grow to manhood without learning that there is such a thing as righteous anger, and that conduct which arouses it merits and receives fitting punishment? Surely there is plenty of authority, scriptural and otherwise, for such procedure. Of course other forms of punishment are often preferable, and brutal or unreasonable whipping should never be given. The important fact is that with young children slight punishments of any kind, applied at the psychological time and in an impressive way, are most efficacious in accomplishing the immediate aim, and likewise in establishing such habits of obedience that severe chastisement of any nature becomes quite unnecessary in later years.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

One point that should receive wide public recognition is that children who have not learned to obey at home should not be permitted to make nuisances of themselves in school, since such monopoly of the teacher's time is not fair to their classmates. The sentiment in every community should be such that school would be regarded as a great privilege, the denial of which must inevitably follow persistent misbehavior. After this has become a uniformly recognized status, — and it will when parents begin to take as much intelligent interest in the school work of their children as they would in the training of a horse or a dog they chance to own, — the habit of obedience will be established in the early years of home training far better than it now is, for then disobedient children will have to attend some private institution that, in return for liberal tuition, may tolerate such conduct.

TRUTHFULNESS and HONESTY are two closely related traits which also need much attention in childhood. Parents are sometimes horrified at discovering untruthful or dishonest tendencies in their little folk, imagining these to be unmistakable signs of degeneracy. However, it is no more reasonable to expect perfection in children in these respects than it would be to look forward to their coming into the world fully proficient

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

in the use of English. In an environment of culture, the habit of correct speech may be formed with little or no special teaching; through association with truthful, honest parents and playmates, right habits, as far as the two traits in question are concerned, may be developed. Nevertheless, as a rule, long-continued, definite, painstaking training is essential in forming correct habits of either speech or of character.

First of all, parents must be free from deception and absolutely honest themselves, since "Little pitchers have big ears," and a remarkable capacity for imitation. Then a single instance of untruthfulness or dishonesty, no matter how small, should not be allowed to pass without the seriousness of the offense and the danger of repetition being impressed. If similar lapses occur, — and very likely they will, — the child should be banished to seclusion with the dominant thought in mind that anyone guilty of such moral weakness is not fit to associate with the rest of the family. This plan, faithfully followed, together with the moral and spiritual influences of home and church, should develop an abiding sense of truth and honesty; but when such a course fails, more strenuous measures must be employed until the desired habits are well grounded. The chief difficulty is that children who are adept

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

at deception may seem exemplary to parents and yet be untruthful or dishonest if their desires happen to be more readily satisfied thereby. For this reason, teachers should promptly communicate with parents when a tendency to lie, copy, cheat, or steal is observed; and after such report has been made, earnest co-operation between home and school to correct the tendency should ensue.

Of course if anything valuable is taken by a child in school, word is usually sent home without delay; but thefts of trifling value and reasonably well-justified suspicions of stealing, falsehood, copying, and cheating are frequently not reported to parents. "An unpardonable breach of duty on the part of school authorities," one might conclude. Nevertheless parents are chiefly responsible for this laxity, because of the attitude they often show toward such reports. Instead of recognizing that lapses of this kind are more or less common in little children, regardless of pedigree or social standing, and earnestly joining forces to correct such tendencies, they seem to regard them as serious reflections on the family honor, to be hidden or denied rather than recognized and cured. To protect themselves, children charge the misdemeanor upon others; and altogether too frequently parents not only side with this

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

view of the case, but sometimes even score the teacher in language that would not sound well in polite society.

The best remedy for this regrettable condition is to have such a good mutual understanding between parents and teachers that misjudgments and recriminations will be avoided. Then with the best good of the children uppermost in mind, home and school will earnestly and actively try to supplement each other's efforts. A live Parent-Teachers' Association in every school may be excellent help in accomplishing both of these much to be desired ends.

Paradoxical as it may seem, **THRIFT** and **GENEROSITY** are two traits that may appropriately be considered together, since, as a rule, the latter must more or less necessarily be preceded by the former. Children should be urged not to be wasteful of food, clothing, and other possessions, and they should also be taught the joy of sharing with others. Upon reaching the period of vigorous longing for sweets, toys, and various pleasures, the fact that the money used to pay for all these is acquired by hard effort, and that many people do not have funds to supply the necessities of life, should be tactfully impressed; and no matter how wealthy parents may be, a reasonable limit of expenditure for any of the purposes named should be main-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

tained. Instead of being allowed a multiplicity of possessions, children should be led to experience the deep joy of making less fortunate little tots more happy by purchasing wisely for them.

To help young folk appreciate the value of money, it is an excellent plan to pay them for the satisfactory performance of some daily home duties and have them keep a systematic account of receipts and expenditures when they are old enough to do so. The money thus earned, together with the various small gifts of cash received from time to time, should be placed in the little home bank, which every child should own. If required for necessary personal expenses, all such money might be taken out later; but wherever possible, part of it should be deposited, when amounts of five or ten dollars have accumulated, in a local Savings Bank. In this connection, the rapidity with which money earns money, and the idea that a penny saved is a penny earned, should often be attractively presented. The wisdom of economy in small expenses through a little personal effort, such as cleaning one's own shoes rather than hiring it done, or walking distances not unreasonably long, if time permits, instead of riding on a street car, should be brought to the attention of children at opportune times.

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

The fact that all who are blessed with a fair amount of prosperity have an obligation to assist in the support of religious and philanthropic institutions and movements, aiming to alleviate the condition of the unfortunate and needy, should also be early inculcated. Many churches, realizing the power of habit formed in childhood, are taking the lead in this line of education by trying to have every member of a family, old enough to attend services, make use of weekly contribution envelopes, no matter how small an amount of money may be placed therein.

Cultivating the habit of not appropriating the best of food, comfort, or pleasure for one's self, if the opportunity is afforded, often requires long-continued and untiring effort, for it is as natural as breathing for many children to want the largest, the best, or the most. However, when parents pursue this failing tactfully, it is likely to disappear, especially if the teaching is illustrated by example as well as by precept.

MODESTY, in all senses of the word, is also a quality which parents should earnestly strive to inculcate. If children are to grow up free from vanity and conceit, they must not, as little tots, become impressed with the idea they are especially smart or beautiful; if they are to develop into pure, chaste men

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

and women, modesty as to exposure of the body and abhorrence of the suggestive or vile in conversation or action must begin in the nursery period. Strict privacy in the matter both of dressing and of attending to necessary bodily functions, and great delicacy in mentioning anything with reference to the latter, except to parents, is one of the first steps. The example of all adults with whom children are intimately associated, in these and similar particulars, is likewise a strong factor in developing this trait. It is also most vital that parents preserve such confidential relations with their children that pernicious friendships or bad influences may be quickly discovered.

By confidentially informing parents of evidences that seem to indicate immodesty, and by tactfully giving a word or suggestion to individual pupils at opportune times, teachers may be of great service in helping to cultivate this vital trait. Then, if in addition to the measures suggested, the numerous pertinent indirect influences of home and school are utilized to impress boys with the ideal that

"My strength is as the strength of ten  
Because my heart is pure,"

and to inspire girls with the earnest conviction that their greatest personal charm and power



## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

will flower in gracious modesty, the efforts of parents and teachers to implant this much to be desired trait should result most happily.

APPRECIATION is another quality which should be carefully cultivated in childhood. A home in which young folk show little or no consideration for the parents who are giving so much of strength, comfort, and pleasure for them, is indeed a sad sight. While it is common in such instances to criticise the children for selfishness and ingratitude, the fault is usually not so much theirs as their parents'. The latter have given everything, but required nothing; and it is natural for children to accept it all as a matter of course and think, "Father and mother do not care; all they want is for us to have a good time."

The most regrettable feature of it all is that the opposite status might just as readily prevail, if, in the process of doing and giving, children were tactfully led to realize that all of these benefits and pleasures cost father and mother time and effort for which loving, thoughtful appreciation now and devoted watchfulness in later years are the natural sequence; and that such appreciation consists not only in respectful words and manner, but in deeds that save steps and show concern for comfort. This course lightens and cheers the lot of parents; and children from

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

families where such a condition prevails carry sweetness and refinement into every circle with which they become identified.

FIDELITY to principle, to duty, or to any person or cause entitled to one's devotion, is another trait that can not be too earnestly fostered in youthful days. A child who has been entrusted with the care of a younger brother or sister, or charged with any other definite responsibility, should be heartily commended for faithfulness, or made to feel deep chagrin at the lack of it. Similar treatment should be accorded stamina or weakness in obeying commands. So, too, evidences of loyalty to friends, home, country, or to God, should be earnestly praised, and tendencies in the opposite direction should be condemned with equal zeal. It would indeed be difficult to over-estimate the influence which men and women, distinguished for their fidelity in both sacred and profane history, have in developing these ideals in children. Stories and poems with reference to these splendid characters should be read and repeated until they become such a vivid part of a child's knowledge that the mere mention of the person or incident will be a stimulus to the ideal sought. Never before have authors and publishers made so much interesting material of this kind readily available. Wise indeed are the parents who have a

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

liberal supply of these attractive volumes to aid in developing the highest and best character ideals. Such books should be read to children as soon as they begin to manifest interest in them. By so doing, parents lay a foundation not only for character ideals but likewise for a wide vocabulary and a love of good literature.

No chapter on Habits of Character would be complete without some suggestions as to inculcating REVERENCE for *God* and *His commands* in youthful minds. Fortunate indeed are the adults whose childhood recollections comprise the nightly repeating of "Now I Lay Me," with Mother kneeling devoutly by the crib-side, the daily meals preceded by a simple but reverential giving of thanks, and the day's work begun or closed with a few words of worshipful prayer. If in addition to this blessed heritage, there also linger recollections of having, in occasional times of stress, been awed into wondering retreat by accidentally discovering mother or father in secret prayer, few conditions in later life are likely to banish belief in God and His Word from the mind.

Yet these simple and impressive practices, alone, are not enough. Parents should consider it a sacred obligation to see that children gain a thorough knowledge of the tenets and traditions of their religious faith.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

“ But we send them to church and Sunday School. Is not that a sufficient discharge of our obligations?” parents might ask.

Certainly not, because in the usual Sunday School not more than a half hour a week, on the average, is devoted to Bible Study. Besides, above the Junior Grades, as a general thing, and in many schools in all grades higher than the Primary, the great majority of pupils make no preparation. Parents do assist or supervise the little children, but many seem to think their responsibility ends at that point.

With the falling-off in interest at home, children proceed to lose their lesson books or to forget to bring them. Having little or no familiarity with the points the teacher tries to present, and a most decided inclination for fun at any time, a large majority of the class visit and fool away the precious hour while the teacher flounders from one topic to another in a vain endeavor to gain attention.

“ But our children at least derive much benefit from the songs and prayer and scripture readings, and likewise from such close association with Christian teachers,” some parents may say.

On the whole these influences are good; but easily satisfied fathers and mothers should visit Sunday School occasionally and

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

observe whether their children in the Intermediate and Senior Grades are taking part in the songs and giving reverential attention during the prayers and scripture readings. "Well, if such a status is at all widely prevalent, there is certainly something radically wrong with Sunday-School officials," parents may further assert.

Sunday-School teachers and officials are the salt of the earth; and if, in the Heavenly Kingdom, crowns are awarded to unselfish, devoted workers from this earthly sphere, these zealous disciples should be among those who receive the greatest rewards. Without money and without price, and with no means of enforcing honest effort or reverential attention, they are spending several hours of valuable time each week in an endeavor to give your children religious instruction, which you, Mr. and Mrs. Parent, by thoughtlessness or indifference, may be rendering practically fruitless. It goes without saying that the very least fathers and mothers should do is to see that their children do not mislay Sunday-School lesson books, and that they arrive at church on time with a lesson well prepared.

With improved methods of administration and teaching in Sunday Schools, such co-operation at home will count for much; but the obligation of parents for the religious

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

education of their children is not fully satisfied even by maintaining a reverential home atmosphere and keeping the young folk in the right attitude toward the Sunday-School work. The wonderful old stories of the Bible must be told and re-told, read and re-read, until each child knows them by heart. In all literature there are no tales more interesting for children, or more efficacious in establishing right ideals of conduct and reverence for God and His commands.

Many excellent books have been prepared to assist parents in this vital work. Hurlbut's "Story of the Bible," Williams' "New Line upon Line" and "New Peep of Day" are among the very best of these to read to little ones; Sangster's "Story of the Bible," because of its simple language and short sentences, is especially good for young folk to read themselves. In addition to this, if the Sunday School one's children attend does not require the memorizing of the Commandments, the Beatitudes, and such helpful and inspiring lines as the 1st, 19th, 23d, 100th, 103d Psalms, and similar passages from both the Old and the New Testament, parents should see to it that this blessed heritage becomes imbedded in the minds and hearts of their children. The best of the sacred hymns, so full of beauty and inspiration, should be sung so frequently in the

## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

family circle that their words, too, become a part of each child's spiritual equipment. The fact that childhood is the time when memorizing is the easiest, and that anything learned in that period is far more readily recalled in later years than that which is committed to memory in adult life, gives added force to this obligation.

"How can time be found for so much?" No less an authority than the Bishop of Durham, in his preface to the "Peep of Day" series, says:—"It is common to defer religious instruction until the child can read in the Testament. One quarter of an hour daily devoted to instruction by word of mouth would prepare the child for comprehending the meaning of the Testament when able to read."

While it would be practically impossible in most churches to have a repetition of the Sunday session of the Bible School on a week day, the Sabbath period for actual scripture study might be readily lengthened by cutting out many more or less extraneous matters that in many schools are allowed to consume valuable time. It would also be quite possible to have an hour's session at four o'clock on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon for concert and individual drill in recitation of scripture and songs, conducted by the minister or his assistant

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

with whatever other helpers might be available.

Much intelligent thought is now being given to the importance of religious education of children, and to employing more time and better directed effort in such instruction. However, no matter what improvements are made or what advantages are afforded, it must always remain the job of parents to keep in close touch with what the Sunday School is trying to do for their children, and to co-operate with and supplement these efforts.

While a firm belief in prayer is likely to be established by the training already suggested, the attention of children should be called to the fact that not only Christ and his disciples and other famous personages of the Bible prayed to God for help and strength, but also that George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and others of the world's greatest secular leaders were often seen on their knees in secret prayer. The fact that such men attributed the success of their efforts largely to help received from prayer is sure to impress children.

Success in all of the lines of training herein suggested depends largely upon having a spirit of mutual love and affection in the home. Tender consideration and thoughtfulness for the practical welfare and happiness



## HABITS OF CHARACTER

---

of their children should be the rule in every family, nor should outward signs, indicative of this status, be wanting. There should be the good-night and the good-bye kiss. Manifestations of affection should not be repelled; and if such impulses are apparently not natural to a child's disposition, they should be wooed by parents with tact and persistence, for developing the sweeter side of children's nature may save much difficulty and unhappiness in later years. Parents should, as a rule, not be autocratic either in commanding or chastising. Indeed, quiet tones of voice and courteous manner are always valuable assets both at home and in school. As has been suggested in a preceding paragraph, stern rebuke and even strenuous punishment need sometimes to be given swiftly and without preliminary parley; but within a reasonable time such incidents should be talked over and the right understanding reached.

Finally, in all character training, patience, forbearance and persistent effort must be the watchwords. Some children may have such strong tendencies toward a trait parents fondly desire them to possess that it seems inborn; while the inclinations of others in the opposite direction will be so marked as to cause astonishment that one's offspring could possibly possess them. As the Shep-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

herd of old followed the lost sheep into the stormy wilds, so parents must earnestly and tenderly devote their best efforts to establishing the desired traits of character in such children. Chance and luck will avail little. Persistent, tactful, prayerful endeavor will often accomplish the apparently impossible.

## CHAPTER VI

### HEALTH HABITS THAT ARE VITAL TO EFFICIENT LIVING

**H**OME and school are probably most neglectful in their lack of concerted effort to establish good health habits in children.

How can this be true, when in many states the study of Physiology and Hygiene is compulsory in elementary schools? The subject is taught, either incidentally or intensively, from the primary grades through the Grammar School course, and facts about the body are so well learned that few children of to-day would ask, as did an investigating youth some years ago, "Mamma, I know where my liver is, but tell me, please, where is my bacon?"

Nevertheless, of what practical value is a child's acquaintance with respiration and pure air, if he is developing the habit of high chest breathing, or is sleeping at night with closed windows? What does it profit little folk to know all parts of the digestive canal and the function of each, if at breakfast they continue to wash down half masticated doughnuts and pancakes with copious

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

draughts of coffee? Of what practical benefit is it to a child to learn that he needs ten hours of sleep daily, when parents permit a more or less unlimited indulgence in moving-picture shows and kindred evening attractions, with their reeking air, late hours, and accompanying eye strain?

A careful observer in almost any elementary school will notice pale, nervous children among the pupils who recite most fluently in the Physiology recitations; and, regrettable to say, he will also observe that the knowledge gained from the study has very little effect in improving their health. That physical improvement is their most vital need and can be won by personally applying the truths learned, makes slight impression. What such pupils *are*, seems to be accepted as a matter of course; what they *are to become* physically, is apparently a matter of little or no concern. Sufficient unto the day is the evil or good thereof.

Any adult now practicing sensible habits in his use of food, air, water, exercise, and rest, because failing health compelled a change in régime, is surprised that his doctor advises very little which he himself did not learn while studying Physiology at school. Why did not the information inspire a personal application at that time? Either because the health and spirits normally

## HEALTH HABITS

---

attending youth, regardless of habits, made any changes seem unnecessary, or more likely the opposite habits were too well established before beginning the study to be broken without the exercise of more will power than children possess.

The wise course is to have the habits first formed the correct ones, and this must necessarily be the job of parents, since many that are vital to efficient living are established before children attend school. Usually the part of the teacher will be to co-operate in forming some habit which parents tell her they have not yet fully succeeded in establishing. Nevertheless, if teachers notice in school that children have not formed any of the essential habits mentioned, they should communicate with parents, and earnestly co-operate in bringing about the desired changes.

The first obligation of parents in the matter of health habits is to see that their babies are supplied with plenty of air, as near like out-of-door atmosphere as is feasible; and to be watchful that, as their little ones grow older, they become so fond of this God-given blessing and so desirous of the benefits which result from breathing it, that they will not be content to remain long in any ill-ventilated room. When little folk are old enough to understand the following semi-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

humorous lines by Howard Carlton Tripp, it will be profitable to have them committed to memory and occasionally repeated:

### EATING AIR

"Once I met a lady, handsome, plump, and fair;  
Said I, 'What's the reason?' Said she, 'Eating air!'  
Said I, 'Sure you're jesting!' Said she, 'Not a bit!  
If you're sick and gloomy, take a dose of it!

"'Throw your shoulders upward. Get out in the sun;  
Concentrate your wishes with your mind—'tis  
done!  
Wake the solar plexus, health will come complete;  
Air is splendid eating—eat and eat and eat!

"'You can't be a glutton on such splendid fare;  
Life is for the having, just keep eating air!  
And your mind will broaden to all pleasures sweet;  
Successes grand await you, if you eat and eat.

"'Climate makes strong people—sunshine keeps  
them free;  
Upward throw your shoulders; eat some air with me;  
Cast drugs to the canines, throw pills to the bats—  
Air is for the lean ones; air is for the fats.

"'Air is for the gloomy, bilious, grave, and sad;  
Air is for the good ones, air is for the bad;  
Air is for the lowly, women, children, men;  
When you are real hungry, pass your plate again!

"'Vitalize your body freely without price!  
Eating air is jolly, eating air is nice;  
And the world about you will appear so sweet  
If you keep on feasting, if you eat and eat!'"

## HEALTH HABITS

---

The breathing habit must also be given very careful attention. Finger-sucking must be absolutely prevented, since it is a frequent cause of irregular teeth and may be a contributing cause to mouth breathing and the various troubles accompanying it. By making use of one of the various devices that are used to prevent finger-sucking, the formation of the habit may be prevented and thus much future illness and expense for operations and special treatment will be avoided. Using pacifiers is of course just as harmful as finger-sucking, and should not be allowed. If a child has a tendency to breathe through the mouth, parents should watch and work persistently until both nostrils are freely used. Often this will require extreme patience and perseverance, for even after adenoids, enlarged tonsils, or other obstructions of the breathing organs have been removed, the mouth-breathing habit will continue. Bandaging the mouth closed during sleeping hours and frequent urging to keep it shut at other times will, if patiently continued, effect the desired habit.

Parents not only should satisfy themselves that their children are taking air into the lungs through the nostrils, but they should also be equally sure that their little ones are forming the habit of rhythmic deep breathing. The primary essentials of this habit

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

are correct sitting and standing position (namely, with shoulders back, chest up, and abdomen inclined inward), and feeling the alternate expansion and contraction of the diaphragm upon the abdominal organs as one breathes. Children should know these facts and their importance before commencing school, — know them as well as their prayers. In fact, as mothers lead their little ones to the love of God and truth through the bedtime prayer and story, they should, with equal zeal and earnestness, impress the idea that future beauty, joy, health, and usefulness will largely depend upon forming correct habits of position and breathing.

A returned missionary has told of a tribe in central Asia that makes rhythmic deep breathing a vital part of its religious teaching. What a priceless blessing it would be to all children, if parents should consider that training their offspring to form this essential habit of respiration is a sacred duty which they dare not neglect!

In an article in the *New York Medical Journal*, Dr. John Pryor, formerly Superintendent of the New York State Hospital for Incipient Tuberculosis, says:—

“Very frequently breathing becomes a partial or incomplete function after childhood. Enough air is admitted to the lungs to support life in a sedentary way, but



## HEALTH HABITS

---

thorough ventilation becomes a rare experience. . . . Many women have never learned how to breathe, and the man who has given up vigorous exercise seldom fills his lungs to their full capacity. . . . The average chest expansion of all patients when they entered the New York State Hospital for Incipient Tuberculosis was two inches and the breathing capacity was almost invariably below the standard required. The almost universal testimony of the patients was that they had never been taught to breathe."

Surely there are few ways in which parents can be of greater service to their children than to equip them with breathing habits that will fortify against disease. What a boon they can bestow upon their much loved little ones by saving them from the fate of the countless thousands who pass the more or less inefficient, listless lives necessarily resulting from poor health or part health! How splendid it is for fathers and mothers to see their children start out from the home in proud possession of the unlimited capacity for work and enjoyment that usually attends deep breathing and rugged health, together with the more dignified, commanding appearance that accompanies correct position!

But suppose children have already formed the habit of sliding down in the seat they are occupying, of standing with the abdomen

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

inclined outward and the chest inward, or of sitting or standing in a stooping position, how can parents help?

By demonstrating the essentials of the correct breathing habit until they are thoroughly understood, and then inspiring young folk deeply with the idea that good looks, good times, good health, and the highest usefulness depend upon correct posture and deep breathing, the attainment of both habits may be made one of their dearest ambitions. Occasional warnings, such as "Straighten up!" or "You're getting round-shouldered!" will count for little. The change is one that young folk must necessarily bring about in themselves. With a full understanding of the essentials to be gained and a reasonable appreciation of the benefits accompanying their attainment, the incorrect habits are likely to be broken, if parents and teachers persevere in emphasizing the inestimable value of deep breathing.

Home training in sensible habits with reference to food and eating is likewise of great value. Few things are of greater practical use to mothers than knowledge of the best food for infants from birth until they are old enough to eat what is furnished the rest of the family, — useful both for its good effects upon the baby's health and also for

## HEALTH HABITS

---

the substantial decrease it may cause in the labor, expense, and worry that attend the rearing of children. This information should be learned by all girls before leaving school. If it has not been, it can be gained from one of the good books prepared on the subject, or from the family physician.

Along with the idea that pure, bracing air is the only kind one should be content to breathe, there should be inculcated the almost equally essential truth that simple, wholesome foods, such as milk, eggs, meat, vegetables, and fruit should constitute the greater part of one's diet, and that fried foods, rich desserts, and candy should be eaten only in small quantities.

Of course the primary duty of parents is to furnish only the most beneficial diet; but that, in itself, is not enough. So much emphasis should be placed upon the fact that simple, nutritious foods make the body healthy, strong, and beautiful that young folk will prefer that kind when away from home and later in life. It is natural for children to want to be as strong, agile, healthy, and beautiful as possible. Impress them early enough with the truth that plain, nutritious foods aid in gaining these characteristics and that the opposite kind will hinder their attainment, and they will be as loath to gorge themselves with pancakes and

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

syrup, candy and rich desserts as they would be to tie a weight on their legs to hinder activity. A full appreciation of the same truth will likewise cause the altogether too common breakfast of coffee or tea and bread to be shunned by young folk as carefully as would be some drug which is known to lessen physical and mental alertness.

Stories of Greek ideals of physical development and beauty, and especially of the benefits of simple living to the Spartans, may be used to advantage with young folk. How Daniel and his three companions on a diet of pulse and water grew both fairer and wiser than the Chaldean youths who partook of King Nebuchadnezzar's meat and wine, is another example likely to inspire emulation in children.

What rhythmic, deep breathing is to respiration, the habit of thorough mastication is to digestion. This practice should be started when children begin to eat solid food, and its vital benefits should be emphasized daily until the habit is acquired. Soaking food in any liquid, or washing down half-chewed food with a swallow of some drink, should both be quickly stopped, since these practices prevent thorough mastication.

The following precepts with reference to foods and eating should be made almost as

## HEALTH HABITS

---

vivid a part of every child's thought and life as the Ten Commandments:—

Simple, plain foods help to make the body strong, healthy, and beautiful, while candy and rich desserts are likely to have the opposite effect unless eaten in small amounts.

Fried foods are usually difficult to digest, and should be avoided when possible.

Coffee, tea, and intoxicating drinks tend to injure children and may do them great harm. Water, milk, and cocoa are the most healthful drinks.

A little seasoning in foods is golden; much seasoning is leaden.

Eating too much food because it pleases the taste hastens the day when nothing will taste good.

Additional minutes of mastication bring additional years of good health.

Hurrying through meals to get out to play hastens the day when one will not care to play.

An ounce of rest to the digestive organs is worth pounds of drugs and patent medicines.

Thorough evacuation of the bowels at a regular hour daily is also one of the essential habits to be formed in childhood. From infancy the vital importance of this function should be so emphasized at home that children will instinctively regard the passing of a day without such a result as a reason for

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

far greater concern than missing one of the regular meals. With such a status in vogue, many bothersome children's illnesses, resulting from incomplete evacuation, will be avoided, and chronic constipation, the bane of so many adults, will be far less common than it is to-day.

Good teeth are essential to perfect digestion, and to be of the greatest possible service, they must be both regular and sound. Lack of exercise, due to eating too largely of soft foods, the finger-sucking habit, continuous mouth breathing, constant sucking in of the lower lip, the frequent use of a pacifier, and the premature removal of some of the temporary set are among the chief causes of irregular teeth. Conscientious, patient mothers, who understand the additional use and beauty of regular teeth, will keep their babies from all of these injurious practices. The science of making irregular teeth more regular is called orthodontia. A specialist in this line of dentistry can greatly improve the most irregular sets. The work requires many short visits, extended over a comparatively long period of time, and is expensive. However, any parents who can possibly pay for the work should have it done, since there are few ways in which one can do more to add to the health and beauty of a child.

## HEALTH HABITS

---

Thorough cleaning of the teeth just before retiring at night is another habit that should be formed early in life. In teaching children how to do this, they should be made to understand that removing all food from between the teeth and from the mouth is the chief aim, since decaying particles in the mouth are the primary cause of decaying teeth. On this account the tooth-brush should be moved up and down instead of crosswise. For a similar reason, dental floss is even more serviceable in cleaning teeth than a brush, since by forcing it between the teeth, food particles are either pushed out, or so loosened that they can be easily rinsed out with water. If a person can afford to have but one of the two, dental floss is preferable to a tooth-brush; but after using the floss, the mouth should be thoroughly rinsed with water, and the teeth then polished with a moist cloth. Children should also learn that tooth-powder or paste is valuable for polishing qualities and also for leaving in the mouth an alkaline reaction which helps to neutralize any acid that may be formed.

Many parents seem to think that the first or temporary teeth need no special care. This is a mistake that has caused much irreparable damage. Teeth should be cleaned daily after they appear in the mouth, and

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

from the time a child is four or five years old they should be examined by a dentist at least once in six months, so that any tendency to malformation or decay may be discovered and corrected. At first thought, this may seem an unnecessary expense; but it is undoubtedly less costly and uncomfortable in the end than to wait until an aching tooth compels such visits, since if no work is needed, the charge is moderate, and the smaller the cavity a tooth contains, the less the pain attending the filling.

Children should be taught that crusts, toast, and similar foods give teeth beneficial exercise, and that candy and sweets are likely to hasten decay. They should likewise learn to avoid such injurious practices as picking the teeth with a pin or other pointed metal, cracking nuts or similar hard substances with the teeth, biting thread or string, immediately following hot foods or drinks with cold or cold with hot, or taking any medicine containing acid or iron except through a tube, since all of these practices may destroy the enamel of teeth and open the way for decay. So impressed should young folk be with the possible danger of such thoughtless habits that they will be as careful to avoid doing them as they would to dodge a blow that might knock out or break a tooth. All who take pride in having



## HEALTH HABITS

---

beautiful teeth will also keep from chewing or smoking tobacco, since either habit causes discoloration.

It is important for children to form correct habits in their use of water, as well as of food and air. This useful fluid composes about two-thirds of the entire body, and is constantly leaving the tissues in perspiration through the pores of the skin, watery vapor in the air breathed out from the lungs, and in the urine excreted by the kidneys. Children should know that drinking freely of water is beneficial both in supplying the tissues with needed material and in stimulating the pores and kidneys to greater action; that at least two quarts of water should be drunk daily, and that a larger quantity is even better.

Many people drink little or no water excepting what is in their coffee and tea at meals. By and by, when afflicted with some serious disease, they are surprised to learn from their physician that if they had only been in the habit of drinking more freely of pure water, their pores and kidneys would have kept more healthful, and the disease would very likely not have started. Besides supplying the tissues and stimulating the pores and kidneys, drinking freely of water is likewise an aid to digestion. The practice of drinking one or two glasses of cool water

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

a half-hour or more before meals, and especially before breakfast, is one of the most beneficial habits a mother can teach a child, since it cleanses and stimulates the digestive organs, and helps to keep the bowels free from constipation.

Children should also learn that perspiration contains waste materials from the body as well as water, and that while the latter evaporates, the waste remains on the skin, and together with the secretion from the oil glands and the tiny scales shed by the skin, will, if not removed, obstruct and interfere with the work of the perspiratory glands. A daily tepid or cold bath and a warm or hot bath at least once a week will keep the skin clean and the pores active. Children who form this custom in childhood are likely to continue it a lifetime, with much personal benefit and satisfaction. A simple but necessary habit which should also be established is that of cleaning and filing the nails and pushing the skin back from them, both when bathing the body and while washing the hands and face. The little time this habit takes will be bountifully repaid by the evidence of good breeding which clean, neat-appearing nails afford.

It may also be of much practical value to children to become acquainted with the simple water remedies and to be trained to

## HEALTH HABITS

---

make use of them. For example, drinking freely of warm water will often relieve a headache caused by indigestion; drinking hot water or hot lemonade, just before retiring, will frequently ward off a cold by starting a free flow of perspiration; soaking the feet in hot water just before going to bed is good for colds, headache, or sleeplessness; and a pint or more of warm water forced into the lower bowel by a fountain syringe will often prevent illness by causing a thorough discharge of waste materials.

Children should also be taught to have reasonable concern as to the purity of their drinking water. They should know that water in wells is often made impure by draining outhouses, stables, or cemeteries, and that sewage may make lake or river water unfit to drink. They should also be well acquainted with the fact that the only sure way to kill typhoid and other disease germs that may be in drinking water is to boil it twenty minutes, — not twenty minutes on the stove, but twenty minutes over the fire after boiling commences. The fact that ice may contain disease germs and that it is better to cool water by placing it in the ice-box rather than by putting ice in the water is also valuable for all to know. If children become fully impressed with the truth of these facts, they will be as particular not to

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

drink water which they do not know is from a pure source as they will not to eat food that there is reason to believe might be poisonous.

Good sense in not allowing the bladder to remain overloaded is another habit that children should early acquire. When too much urine is allowed to collect there, poisonous urea is not taken from the blood as it should be, and too great a strain is placed on the muscles of the bladder. Children should be taught the importance of tactfully finding an opportunity for relieving themselves, under such circumstances.

A fact which all mothers should know is that from babyhood the foreskin of a boy's penis should be pushed back, at least once a week, during the morning bath, so that all accumulated secretions and deposits may be washed off. When this is not done, the tightness of the foreskin and the accumulation underneath are likely to produce an irritation that causes the child to scratch the organ and possibly form the habit of masturbation. If a mother tactfully attends to this duty in the infancy and early childhood of her boy, when the lad is old enough to bathe himself, he will naturally continue that part of his bath. It hardly seems possible that the faithful performance of this simple duty might have saved many boys from growing to be more or less nervous

## HEALTH HABITS

---

wrecks and even from becoming inmates of insane asylums; yet eminent authorities claim this to be a fact.

The future efficiency and happiness of children may largely depend upon how much and how well they can use their eyes. What can parents do to help insure their precious little ones the blessings of good sight? The first responsibility in this respect is that in case there is any discharge from an infant's eyes shortly after birth, it should be most carefully attended to by a physician or a nurse. It is estimated that one-tenth of all blindness is due to lack of attention when the eyes of babies are thus affected. However, the right solution applied at the right time will stop the discharge and save the eyes.

Especial pains should be taken to shade a baby's eyes from the sun or other bright light. If children are weak and sickly at the usual age for beginning school, they should not be allowed to attend until their health is much improved, for the eyes are likely to be too weak for the additional burden which even the Kindergarten or First Grade will impose.

If, after children have begun to use books, parents notice a tendency to hold the printed page too near or too far from the eyes, an oculist should be consulted without delay. This duty is often neglected because it is

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

bothersome or expensive, or for the reason that parents do not like to see young children wearing glasses. The greater bother, expense, loss of efficiency and beauty that are likely to come later on, if glasses are not purchased when necessary, will usually make such neglect very costly in the end.

Parents may also help their children to cultivate and preserve good sight by teaching them to know and apply the following rules:—

Always have plenty of light for sewing, reading, and other close work.

Have the light come from behind and over the left shoulder when doing close work.

Always sit erect and hold the head up when reading or sewing.

Never do close work facing the light.

Do not read or sew by twilight or any other changing light.

Do not look steadily at the sun or any other bright light.

Read only books and papers that have good print, with sufficient space between the words and between the lines.

Hold any book or paper you are reading up toward the level of the eye, since the effort for the muscles is much easier than when the printed page lies flat on a desk or table.

Do not read while lying down.

## HEALTH HABITS

---

Do not rub the eyes with your hands; disease germs may be rubbed in.

Do not wipe your face or eyes with the same towel other people have used.

Resting the eyes from close work for a few days will often make them strong again; rest from close work by artificial light will frequently have a similarly good effect.

Impaired hearing unfits one for many useful occupations; it also limits a person's capacity to learn and to enjoy. For these reasons parents should train their children to keep this useful sense at its best.

Children should be made to realize how great a calamity the impairment of hearing is, and that to help ward off such a misfortune they should practice the following rules:—

Never put pencils or other pointed articles in the ear.

Do not try to remove an insect, button, or any small foreign body from the ear with a wire or anything pointed. If it does not fall out when the ear is inclined downward and the head shaken, go to a doctor.

Do not try to swab or dig out ear-wax. Careful bathing each day will keep the ear passage free from such accumulations. If enough has formed to block the passage, consult a physician.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Do not remain near cannon or giant fire-crackers that are about to explode.

Avoid a blow on the ear, and do not strike anyone else there.

Do not snuff any liquid violently up the nose.

While in swimming, do not jump from any high place without holding the nose.

Never take frequent or large doses of quinine.

Do not work amidst the loud clatter of machinery without wearing ear-protectors.

Breathe through the nose and keep as free as possible from colds.

If you do not seem to hear as well as other children, have a doctor test both ears.

If you have roaring or other unusual sounds in the ears, or if you have continued ear-ache or discharge of pus from the ears, consult a specialist without delay.

Learning and applying these few simple rules would have saved many deaf people much handicap and unhappiness. What a privilege it is for parents to forearm their children against such misfortunes, and how small is the effort required, compared with the possible benefits to be gained!

The value of vigorous out-of-door exercise in keeping folk strong, healthy, active, and graceful should be one of the best learned parts of every family's creed. Some children



## HEALTH HABITS

---

are too weak to play well. Therefore they do not like outdoor games, and even find them unsafe. Others are so fond of various inside occupations that they play very little in the open air. After leaving school, many adults give up play and exercise; in a few years any unusual physical exertion makes their muscles lame, and even a short run gets them out of breath.

Children who do not like to play out of doors should be made to understand how much their health, happiness, and efficiency depend upon taking part in such pastimes; they should also be urged to enter into these sports until such encouragement is unnecessary.

Parents should encourage their children to become so interested in tennis, golf, skating, sliding and other open-air games that they will engage in them, whenever opportunity permits, as long as they live. The great obstacle is that adults often can not readily find either time or opportunity for such sport. Walking, however, is a pastime always available. Both children and adults should cultivate a liking for this beneficial exercise, and prefer to walk any reasonable distance time will permit, to riding in a street car or in an automobile. Rapid walking stimulates the circulation and brings many muscles into play, thus

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

keeping them hard and fit for use. There is great satisfaction in having the muscles vigorous instead of soft and flabby. Children will fully appreciate this fact, if parents emphasize and exemplify it. The best feature of all is that delicate, sickly children who become imbued with the right ideal and persevere in attaining it, can grow to be strong and vigorous. Walter Scott, Theodore Roosevelt, and other well-known examples of this type of child can be made inspiring incentives to little folk, if parents will make use of the interesting stories of their lives.

In recent years, much has been said and written about nervous, sickly children. Parents and doctors often blame the schools for this condition, declaring that there are too many studies and that too much home work is required. While the curriculum is overcrowded, the cause for the nervousness and ill health of many children may be found in the home and not in school. It may be due to lack of nutritious food or to incorrect eating habits. Frequently too much candy is the cause. Often there is not enough outdoor play, or perhaps the sleeping room is kept too warm, or is not well supplied with pure air. Some malformation of the eye, which a skilful oculist might readily correct with glasses, may be the primary difficulty.

Most generally, however, the chief causes

## HEALTH HABITS

---

are lack of regular sleep and too much excitement. Instead of going to bed at nine o'clock or before, the moving-picture show, dancing school, or some other evening attraction makes the retiring hour very much later. Amusement and social pleasures have the right of way in some families, while the education and healthful development of the children hold a more or less secondary place. The responsibility for this regrettable condition rests with parents alone, and can not be rightfully blamed on any other source. While times and customs may have changed, "Early to bed and early to rise" is just as wise a motto as it ever has been; and home with its simple duties, wholesome games, and guiding parental influences is still the best place for children to spend their evenings. The more quickly parents generally realize these truths and apply them in bringing up their children, the better it will be for the coming generation.

That until high school has been completed, young folk should not attend more than one evening entertainment or social affair a week, and that one invariably on Friday or Saturday night, should be an inflexible law in every household. With this rule generally enforced, the number of nervous, sickly children will quickly decrease, and the home will again occupy that important place in

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

the training of the young which it is so well fitted to hold.

Acquainting their children with correct ideas about the reproductive organs, their use and abuse, is one of the most important duties of parenthood, and yet one that is very frequently neglected. On this account there has been much discussion in recent years as to when and how sex hygiene should be taught in the public schools. Absolutely the best place for teaching this subject is the home; the ideal teachers of it are the *parents*, and the best time for beginning is between the ages of twelve and fourteen, though parents should always answer simply and truthfully any questions on this subject which their children at any age may ask them. Thus the right information, imparted in a tactful, earnest way, will fortify young folk for a pure sexual life, and make them regard the subject as sacred to home and the domestic circle.

But there will always be some parents who will prove delinquent in this important duty. Should not the schools make up for their neglect?

Emphatically yes! It should be some teacher's business to make sure that every child, after reaching a certain age, has this important information imparted to him or her, by the parents if possible; otherwise by

## HEALTH HABITS

---

some one especially well adapted to win the respect and confidence of the particular child. Persons with a rare combination of strength, simplicity, tact, and insight will be needed; but such will usually be found among the devoted teachers of a school, and, if not there, among the social or church acquaintances of the child.

Perhaps the best way to begin the matter will be for the principal to mail a printed communication to parents saying that, in the judgment of the best authorities, the child is now of the right age to be made acquainted with essential facts of sex hygiene; that it is better for parents to attend to this important duty themselves, but, if they prefer to have the information given at school, they should mail a request for the child to be admitted to a talk by some one who is competent to handle the subject in the right way. The only instance in which this instruction should be given without the request of parents is in the case of children from homes of vice and ignorance from which no answer to a communication from the school on any subject would be likely to be received.

Five conditions will be vital to the success of such an undertaking in elementary schools. The time should depend upon age, not grade. The principal's printed communica-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

tion to parents should be courteous, complete, and in every way of a character to command confidence and respect. Instruction should be given to individuals or to small groups. The information imparted should be in friendly, confidential conversation, and not in formal teaching. If possible, parents should know and approve of the information that is given and tactfully supplement it at home.

In both high school and college a different procedure may be followed. If the former is co-educational, it should have a class in Physiology and Hygiene for girls and another for boys in both the first and the last year of the course. It might also be remarked, by the way, that the separation of the sexes in the Physiology recitation would be advisable from the fourth grade in elementary schools, as many points under various topics might be dwelt upon more effectively if such were the case. The aim in high-school classes should not be to prepare for examinations, but to fit human beings for the highest and best living. To this end, live discussions and debates on many of the topics heretofore introduced in this chapter should be held. One of the chief features, however, should be frank talks, broader and more extended in the last year, on the laws governing sexual intercourse and the penalties

## HEALTH HABITS

---

of their violation; also on the responsibilities of parenthood, and important facts concerning the care of infants. Similar courses, possibly more scientific but equally practical, should be given at college, and at both institutions the subject should be made compulsory for all.

With the suggested plan in operation, practically every child would be fortified with the essential knowledge, outlined above, before running the gauntlet of vice, since the compulsory education law forces all to attend school until they are fourteen years old. As a rule, the first information would come from those who are nearest and dearest, because the communication in regard to sex hygiene from the school principal would usually influence all but the most timid or careless parents to give the information themselves. The additional instruction in high school and college would not come as something squeamish or shocking, but as additional information on a sacredly practical subject. How much disappointment, unhappiness, shame, and sin might be prevented; how many ill-considered, ungenial, unhappy marriages might be avoided, if home and school were to co-operate practically on this important subject.

In the preceding paragraphs of this chapter, the author has suggested how parents

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

may train their children in the vital health habits that will serve the best growth and development of the wonderful bodies God has given them. Impressing these facts on little folk will require untiring effort and unlimited patience on the part of parents; but the labor and anxiety saved through the improved health of the little ones, and the deep satisfaction experienced in their better development, will more than compensate for the effort thus expended.



## CHAPTER VII

### HOME EDUCATION PRIOR TO ENTERING SCHOOL

**T**HE first five years of a child's life are a period of tremendous activity and remarkable acquisition. From the helplessly prone babe through the rising, sitting, creeping, tottering, standing stages to perfect muscular control is a journey hard to calculate. From the time when "The only language is a cry," through the sweet lisping "um," "ah," "baby," "no," "mamma," the laconic phrases, and Indian-like elliptical sentences to sufficient command of English for expressing one's thoughts, is a course wise makers of school curricula would indeed be puzzled to outline. From the limited horizon of food and Mother to an acquaintance with home and neighborhood environment and the qualities of much that is found therein, is a growth in concepts and ideas bordering on the marvelous. How busily little muscles and eyes and ears and fingers have worked to acquire so much! What discouraging obstacles they must have overcome! What impassable gulfs they have groped their way through! The most remarkable part of it all is that this vast

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

amount of information and accomplishment is gained by children largely through *observation* and *imitation*, — a fact which parents and educators may well ponder, especially in connection with the home education of children prior to entering school.

During this pre-school period, the chief aim of parents should be to develop correct habits of health and character along the lines suggested in preceding chapters. However, if out-of-door play and exercise are to become the rule of the home, tact and intelligence need to be exercised, for small children, on account of timidity, lonesomeness, or inability to amuse themselves, will improve every opportunity to come inside. Securing playmates, teaching simple games, and providing suitable playthings are among the best ways for parents to help their little ones gain a lasting fondness for being out of doors.

In families that can afford them, the most attractive inducements to exercise in the open air are *things that go*. By far the best of these is the *Irish Mail*, because it exercises both arms and legs, and besides increasing lung capacity, greatly strengthens the abdominal muscles. The author knows a boy whose digestion up to the age of four was so delicate that often for several successive days he could retain no food. The end of these

## HOME EDUCATION

---

attacks was correlative with the purchase of an Irish Mail, which the youth had to be taught to ride, but in which he became so interested that for more than a year he operated it most vigorously whenever weather conditions permitted. His digestion and general health and strength all improved by leaps and bounds, while the amount spent for the vehicle was not one-third of any one of the numerous doctor's bills for the child in preceding years. Children from three to ten years of age like to use these machines. While they are usually bought for boys, girls also like them and should not be deprived of the great benefits resulting from their use.

The *Tricycle* is next in value to the Irish Mail, and is even more attractive to many since it is more easily operated. The *Roller-cart*, which is probably most popular of all with boys, is not so good for development, since most of the work is done with one leg.

In summer a well-located sand-pile will keep small children happy by the hour, and is a valuable adjunct to any yard. Sufficient sand for this purpose can be bought for about two dollars. It is a good plan to enclose the sand with strong boards, and to have a hinged cover for children to close when through with their play, so that the sand may be kept clean and fit for use.

A swing, a trapeze or horizontal bar, and

a horizontal ladder may all be installed in a yard with little expense compared with the amusement and benefit they are likely to afford little folk. Soft-ball tossing, ring toss, and throwing bean-bags through a hole all train the hand and eye, and will interest children for brief periods. While croquet is not an athletic game, it is a source of much interest for children above the age of five, and is also good training for the hand and eye.

But there are times when it is not feasible for children to be out of doors. How may their energies then be most profitably directed indoors? In answering this question, the chief aims to be kept in mind are the development of robust health and strength, educating the hand and eye, and the incidental gaining of knowledge and facility that will later help in school.

For accomplishing the first two of these aims, a children's playroom is the best possible adjunct to any home. Here the *Spalding's Home Gymnasium*, combining swinging rings, trapeze, stirrups, and swing, may be installed at an expense of six dollars. An adjustable horizontal bar may be placed in the doorway. Chest weights and a rowing machine may be added as children grow older, if space permits.

In this room a *work bench* may also be

placed with suitable tools for children, and plenty of pine wood, both of which should be used by the girls of the family as well as by the boys. A full equipment for *cutting* and *pasting* should also be among the things available for little folk in such a room. Illustrated papers and magazines supply abundant material for this purpose, and if parents give this occupation a little direction and personal interest, considerable facility, and even some artistic sense, may be readily cultivated. The Perry Pictures and others of a similar character, which may be purchased at small cost, are very helpful in developing the artistic side. Cutting and pasting are especially desirable for the Children's Playroom, since these occupations cause so much litter and stickiness that they can be allowed only to a limited extent in other parts of the house. If blunt scissors are used, even very young children can undertake this pastime without danger, and few occupations will give them more pleasure.

However, children while in the house can not always be relegated to the playroom. What can parents supply that will direct the energies of active little ones along beneficial lines and at the same time interest and entertain them?

One of the very best investments of this character is a small blackboard. The most

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

satisfactory kind for the purpose is of slate, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by 2 ft., on an adjustable, easel-like frame. This costs about three dollars but quickly earns a place in the home. If the board is made with the letters and figures indelibly inserted along the top border, or if they are written there in chalk by some older member of the family, little children will try to make them. With a reasonable amount of coaching, they will gain surprising freedom in using the hand and arm in this way, thus developing facility and confidence which will later be of practical help at school.

The *sandpaper letters*, so highly recommended by Madame Montessori may be prepared at home without great labor, and will be helpful in giving children the correct idea of form in learning to write. *Cards* and *blocks*, having colored pictures of animals and the letters of their names, please little folk and help them to become familiar with both the animals and the alphabet. Some families have found Spelling Frames containing movable colored letters very useful in familiarizing children with the alphabet and with the spelling of simple words. Some have also used Word Building Frames to advantage in interesting children in words and sentences, even before they know the alphabet.

The author has heard drawing slates highly commended for home use, but his own chil-

## HOME EDUCATION

---

dren have taken little interest in them. They have, however, spent much time and taken great delight in coloring animals, small houses, and other objects of interest outlined in some of the cheap but excellent painting books prepared for children. For this work *crayola* is much better than water-color paints.

Stringing colored cubes, cylinders, and spheres familiarizes children with form and color, besides training their eyes and hands, and is an occupation in which very young children delight. Building blocks, either colored or dissected, are an enjoyable source of entertainment and help in learning ideas of form. Sliced pictures and picture blocks will also interest and amuse for many successive minutes, as soon as little folk are old enough to learn to put them together.

Some families find the *abacus* valuable help in giving a foundation for the idea of number. Others find Lotto and Farm-Yard Lotto interesting and profitable for their children. Dominoes, too, have furnished much stimulation in learning to count and in getting number ideas.

Sewing-cards and cloth that have animals or other objects of interest in large enough outline to prevent eye strain interest children, and help in training both the hand and eye. Much of Madame Montessori's appa-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

ratus could doubtless be used to good advantage in the home training of children, but unfortunately its cost is prohibitive except in very well-to-do families. However, the two most practical things for home use that it comprises, — namely the *tying-frame* and the *sandpaper letters*, can be made by any mother. Parents may also well profit by Madame Montessori's ideas as to teaching children very early in life to dress, undress, and attend to rubbers, for themselves, and leading them to perform little duties about the home in an efficient manner. Such education benefits them by training the eye and hand and by cultivating self-reliance; it also lightens the duties of mother or nurse.

The chief point to be remembered in connection with the pre-school use of all the articles and devices mentioned is that attention to them must not be forced but attracted. Children should be led to work with them while they enjoy doing so, but should *not* be compelled to continue if they tire. Tactfulness on the part of parents will help greatly in arousing interest. Friendly direction, sympathetic advice, enthusiastic commendation and occasional rewards will prove effective helps in cultivating facility, neatness, and even skill.

Given some or all of the materials suggested



in this chapter for pre-school training, children with little or no assistance or direction will gain much that is of real value; with the sympathetic comradeship of grandmother, mother, or devoted nurse, the happiest kind of times will be enjoyed, and surprising facility will be gained along with the pleasure.

The cultivation of good table habits is a problem that puzzles many parents. In a home of culture, children should unconsciously absorb such habits; but, strangely enough, this result does not always follow. The writer once knew a girl who in spite of persistent exhortations and reminders, persisted in not saying "please" and "thank you" at the table, or at other times when courtesy required. It happened that this particular child very much wanted a pair of ball-bearing roller skates to replace the ordinary variety which she had used for some time. The plan of rewarding her with a penny every time she remembered to say "please" and "thank you" was given a trial. It is needless to say that the ball-bearing roller skates were the child's property before many weeks elapsed, and that the desired habit was readily acquired. Of course financial reward is not, as a rule, the best aim to place before children; but there certainly are cases in which it is both effective and justifiable.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

In shaming children out of mussing, fussing, greediness, and other disagreeable habits, the *Goop Books* may be used to advantage, since the funny rhymes and amusing pictures appeal to the imagination of young folk. *The Little Goop Directory* will answer the same purpose very well for families that are limited in the amount of money they can spend for children's books.

Children of five and above listen eagerly to the *Rollo Books* — and gain much practical benefit from the lessons Dr. Abbott has woven into them.

*Little Susy's Six Birthdays*, *Six Teachers*, and *Little Servants* delight children under five, and are a wholesome influence in their character development. Of course there are hundreds of stories and books that may have a beneficial influence upon the unfolding minds of children. Those above mentioned are so inexpensive that they may be owned in the humblest home, and so full of interest to young children that they will bear frequent repetition. It takes but a brief time for little folk to discover that advantage may often be gained by lying; that the appetite may be gratified by stealing; or that personal pleasure or comfort may be increased in various ways through selfishness or other misdeeds. The *regrettable consequences* of such lapses they are not able to note through

## HOME EDUCATION

---

personal observation. From the experiences of others, naturally and vividly presented in narrative, the folly of unworthy qualities of character is brought home in a way likely to leave at least an unconscious influence which will in a measure serve to counteract some of the opposite realities of daily life.

A friend of the author uses a piece of cardboard about 12 by 9 inches in dimensions on which a record of the daily conduct of each of her children is kept. If, on the whole, the child has been good, a gold star is placed thereon at the close of the day. If, in the judgment of the assembled family at dinner, its conduct has not been satisfactory, a blot is used instead, the size of the black mark varying with the enormity of the misbehavior. This unique plan works very well with children from the age of three to nine, and is worth a trial.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST THREE GRADES OF SCHOOL

**T**HERE is a hard tug at the heart-strings the first morning Mother leaves her precious darling at school. It seems the last act in the drama of baby days. Up to that moment maternal care and watchfulness have largely protected the little one from unpleasantness, discomfort, and harm. Now its health and happiness must, for several hours of the day, be entrusted to another. How will he take to the new life? Will other children treat him well? Can he get to school and back safely? These and other anxious thoughts fill the mind of a loving parent, — especially if the child is the first of the family to start on the long school journey.

Fortunately most children do take kindly to the new life. In fact it becomes so large a part of the thought of many that they play school much of their free time in the interval between sessions. With occasional exceptions, they are well used by other children, and very few have any serious trouble on the way to and from school. Nevertheless the event is a critical one in the family history.

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

Mother is right in so regarding it; nor should she leave school without first having a brief talk with the teacher. Any unusual condition of the child, such as defective vision or hearing, nervousness, or supersensitiveness, should be explained; and thereafter, the mother should pay an occasional brief visit to note what is being done in the class-room, and to find out how she may best co-operate at home to aid in the progress of the child.

It is hard to understand why parents so often neglect this duty. Probably many do intend to make such visits, but numerous other matters crowd out the good intention. Some no doubt feel that education is the teacher's business and that their part is ended when the child is duly registered. Still others may think that such visits are annoying to teachers, and hence, in the end, likely to do their children more harm than good.

There may be teachers who resent such visits, but the more quickly a district is rid of them the better. Well-qualified instructors with the right professional spirit,—and the great majority are of that kind,—welcome the unobtrusive inspection of parents, well knowing that the intelligent home co-operation which is likely to follow will make their own work more effective. A point also worthy of consideration is that in every business some workers are easily satisfied with their efforts,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

if it is not evident that higher standards are expected. The public, and especially parents, are the employers of teachers, and by occasional tactful visitation they can do much to keep up high standards in any school.

"But what is the use of visiting school or trying to help my child at home, either? I don't understand how teachers do things now. It is all so different from the way I learned," some mothers may say.

Methods of teaching have changed, but fortunately they are neither so complex nor so difficult that parents can not readily understand them, and ably second the teacher's efforts. In the paragraphs that follow, a concise statement of the aims and methods of teachers in the most important studies of the various grades will be made, in the hope of clarifying this subject for parents, and helping them to become more efficient partners in the early education of their children.

The *Kindergarten* is a very valuable year in school, but it covers no prescribed subject matter in the Course of Study, and makes few specific exactions of the child. Through various games, songs, exercises, and occupations, it aims to accustom children to being with others, to develop their sense of music, rhythm, form and color, and to train them to do things for themselves. Therefore it

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

will suffice to say in this connection that mothers who are following the Montessori method to the extent that they are teaching their little ones to do as much as possible for themselves, and to be helpful in the home in various ways, are well supplementing the Kindergarten instruction.

Learning to read, write and spell, gaining facility in counting and in using the various number combinations, and practice in oral language and drawing largely make up the work of the first three grades. The present way of teaching reading to beginners is perhaps the least well understood by parents. Memorizing the alphabet, and getting acquainted with all new words by laborious spelling was so long the method of learning to read that even many parents, who were themselves instructed in accordance with a more modern plan, feel that if their children are being taught in any other way they can not possibly understand the process well enough to assist them at home. How a child can recognize a word without first having learned to spell it, is, they imagine, a puzzle too difficult for any but teachers to understand.

A little thought will readily show the fallacy of this impression. To recognize a person or an animal, a child does not first have to memorize or even note the color of

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

the eyes, the shape of the nose, or the size of the ears. He gets the impression as a whole at first, and becomes acquainted with the details later, if for any reason his attention is especially called to them. The same principle holds good in becoming acquainted with smaller objects or with words. The object or word as a whole is recognized without definitely knowing the individual parts. To express himself in writing later on, the letters must be known, and hence spelling is learned.

It is not necessary here to show how the *phonic, word, and sentence methods* displaced the old *A, B, C System* of learning to read, nor why a combination of these three plans is now so largely in use. Let it suffice to say that three beneficial results have followed. Children take much greater interest in learning to read; they learn to read much faster; they also form the habit of getting thought from the printed page much more quickly, for, instead of dwelling upon individual letters, the mind is trained to look for the meaning of a line or a sentence.

## LEARNING TO READ

Successful teachers may differ widely in the details of teaching reading to beginners, yet, as a rule, the same general principles



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

are followed. Certain words in which the interest of the class has been aroused are printed, or written, on the blackboard. In some schools script is used largely, or entirely, for this work. In others only printed words are employed for the first five weeks, or longer. The latter plan is better, if the teacher prints well, since the transition from the words on the blackboard to the print in the books is easier. Pupils are led to associate the word or words with the ideas they represent. They observe the printed or written expressions carefully, and afterward read them with the teacher, and later individually. Then they are tested and drilled on the words which are arranged in different order on various parts of the blackboard. Lists of the words which have been taught are also kept on the blackboard for frequent review.

The vocabulary thus taught is usually made up of words from the beginning of the primer, and so transition to the printed page readily follows. Usually there is frequent repetition and variety of arrangement of new words in each lesson in the book. Words are also frequently repeated in succeeding lessons, especially if they present any particular difficulty.

In the matter of calling attention to letters and letter sounds or *phonics*, there is a wide

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

difference. Some schools emphasize this feature from the outset, aiming to enable pupils to master new words for themselves as soon as possible. Others put this work off for a few months, and still others give very little intensive drill of the kind until toward the close of the second term. All efficient teachers, however, are careful to have their pupils gain right habits of speech through imitating the correct way of sounding the various letters and words; they also take particular pains with final consonant sounds, such as *t* or *d* before a word beginning with the sound of *u*,—for example, *Don't you, Could you.*

Parents who follow the work their little ones are doing in school are surprised at the large number of words they are early able to recognize, and the facility with which they can read from the Primer. Careful observation of their progress will also disclose the following facts:—

Large words, such as *grandpa* or *automobile*, are more readily learned than smaller ones.

Words like *dog*, *horse*, and *playhouse* in which children naturally have special interest, and likewise words which they can demonstrate by action, such as *fly*, *run*, and *jump*, are quite readily retained.

*The, this, that, then, were, was*, and others

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

that are very similar in appearance, or have no special intrinsic interest, are difficult to retain and need the most drill.

Children with excellent memories but with a tendency to be careless observers may seem to be reading remarkably well, when in reality they are repeating line after line from memory, being able to recognize but few of the individual words.

These and various other difficulties the First Grade teacher of to-day is alert to overcome. Both fluency and naturalness of expression for her youthful charges are also among her constant aims. Considering the fact that probably, on the average, ninety-five percent. of her forty or more pupils can not recognize a word of script or print at the outset, that many of them are fidgety, careless, or inattentive, that some are very dull, and that often one or more may be absolutely defective, is it not truly wonderful that she is able to accomplish so much?

And yet an indiscriminating public often seems to think that because discipline is not hard, subject matter is easy, and hours of work are short, almost anybody can teach little children. The fact should be more generally recognized that *no* job in the school requires higher intelligence and skill, better directed energy and perseverance, more genuine and enthusiastic love of chil-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

dren than that of the First Grade teacher. School Boards and other responsible officials should appreciate the fact that parents do not want such unwise economy in the management of their schools.

Considering the fact that learning to read is really the most important of mental acquisitions and that success in various other studies depends so largely upon possessing this ability, is it not strange that so many intelligent parents who could readily find the time to assist, if they tried, are content if their children have only the instruction that one of from forty to fifty pupils can get from an over-worked First Grade teacher?

*How can parents help in this most interesting process?*

Have at home a copy of the basic Primer used in the child's class.

Have the little one read at home each day the part of the text that has been taught at school.

Make sure that he has not merely *memorized* the story but really *knows* the *individual words*. Drill on the words he does not seem to know well.

If a small blackboard is part of the home apparatus, and every family that can afford it should have one, give drill also on the script forms of the various words, if the teacher is doing this. It is needless to say

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

that enthusiastic praise and small financial rewards add materially to the success of these home reviews.

### READING IN THE SECOND AND THIRD GRADES

One or more books besides the basic Primer are usually read in the First Grade. Attractive, illustrated books, which little folk delight to read at times when they have earned the privilege, are often kept on a low table somewhere in the First Grade classroom, and pupils can often recognize several hundred different words by the end of the first year.

One of the very best ways parents can help in preparation for Second Grade is to have their children do enough reading and writing at home, during the long summer vacation, to keep this recently acquired stock of words fresh in mind and ready for use. The basic Primer and the home blackboard will help in this. So also will some of the numerous interesting books about animals, birds, and children which can now be so inexpensively obtained. Many children will gladly read to their parents from pure interest. When this factor alone is not sufficient incentive, a small reward for each book completed will add a tremendous stimulus.

It is an excellent plan for every child to

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

begin to save for college expenses, at least by the age of five. The various money gifts received and rewards earned for lessons and other work should be placed in his little home bank, and the amounts accumulating therein should be deposited in a savings bank, just before the commencement of interest periods. Thus the child will grow up with the idea that he is going to college, and that higher education is something well worth working and saving for.

As children advance in the grades, the reading text increases in difficulty. Through work with *phonics*, *phonograms* (similar syllables of words, for example, *ame* in *came*, *same*, *dame*, *fame*, *lame*; *ill* in *fill*, *mill*, and *till*), and spelling, power to recognize new words for themselves is gradually gained. A steady growth in facility, spirit, and naturalness of expression should also be attained. Increased power to gain thought readily from the printed page is, in the end, the great aim of reading, and to cultivate this faculty, children are required to tell the thought of one or more paragraphs that have been read, or to read a paragraph silently and then give the thought.

Teachers make a special effort to cultivate the following habits, and parents may profitably see to it that their children are gaining them.

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

To have pupils stand squarely on both feet and to hold the book in the left hand about a foot from the eyes.

To judge what unfamiliar words are through the sounds of letters and combinations of letters.

To look to a word, phrase, or sentence for its meaning.

To enunciate and pronounce correctly.

To realize that a word is not a useful tool unless its pronunciation and meaning are known, and that the more words mastered in this way, the greater the possibilities for understanding, enjoying, and being useful.

To ask intelligent questions about anything in the reading lesson they do not understand.

Besides assuring themselves that these habits are being formed, parents may best assist in the reading work in the second and third grades by drilling their children on the *new words* in the various lessons. They may also help by giving special drill on the enunciation of final consonants and on the pronunciation of such commonly mispronounced words as *new*, *news*, *duty*, *half*, *dance*, *again*, *been*, *pretty*, and *government*. Even if these words are correctly taught in class, children hear them mispronounced so frequently out of school that they are likely to acquire the incorrect habit, unless often corrected at home. Calling attention to the

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

fact that *new* and *news* are, except for the initial letter, pronounced the same as *mew* and *mews*, and that the *u* in *duty*, *duke*, and similar words always has the *long sound*, will help, and pupils should be made to pronounce them correctly in concert again and again.

Finally, the great motive for learning to read, — the fact that signs, advertisements, letters, papers, and books all have a special message for anyone who can recognize the words that compose them, should be kept constantly in children's minds. That the printed pages of books have far more interesting stories and useful information for them than even Grandma can tell, is also an incentive well worth while with little folk.

It should also be remembered that in learning to read, interesting subject matter is a wonderful stimulus. In recent years, authors and publishers have made great advancement in producing interesting and attractive text-books for this purpose. However, Boards of Education in some localities continue the use of unsuitable books as a matter of economy. By impressing their school officials with the greater desirability of the more interesting, better arranged, and more attractive texts, Parents' Associations can readily bring about a change for the better.



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

### PENMANSHIP

Madame Montessori has very little children begin penmanship by feeling the form of letters cut out of sandpaper and tracing them in the air or on the blackboard. It is quite probable that such practice, either at home or in the Kindergarten, would be an aid to penmanship instruction in American schools.

The general custom here, however, is to begin teaching penmanship along with reading in the First Grade. In recent years the beginning drill has been given at the blackboard, where through practice in lines, loops, ovals, and curves, a foundation for free arm movement and muscular control is begun. The writing of letters and words on the blackboard is next undertaken, the teacher setting the copy. The blackboard is excellent for this beginning work, because it gives opportunity for larger writing and freer arm movement by pupils and more ready criticism by teachers; and pupils can profit by noting the work of other children and the criticisms made concerning it.

After some muscular control and freedom of movement have been gained at the blackboard, pupils take up the work in similar order with wax crayons or large soft lead pencils and paper at their desks. Here they

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

are shown the correct position for writing, — a point which needs much emphasis for several years. The following directions, or others similar to them, are widely used:

### *Position for Writing*

1. Clear the desk to make room for free movement of the arm.
2. Sit well back on the seat with both arms on the desk.
3. Let the body lean forward from the hips, but do not allow it to touch the desk.
4. Keep the shoulders even, the head erect, and the feet flat on the floor.
5. Have the upper edge of the paper turned a little to the left, holding the paper firmly in place with the left hand.
6. When writing, let the right arm rest on the muscle of the elbow, and keep the wrist free from the desk.

### *Pencil or Pen Holding*

1. Hold the pencil or pen between the thumb and the first and second fingers, letting it cross the first finger at the knuckle near the hand and the second finger opposite the nail.
2. Keep the thumb slightly bent and resting on the side of the pencil or pen near the lower joint of the first finger.
3. Keep the other two fingers bent under

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

the hand, the end of the little finger lightly touching the paper as you write.

The position described is conducive to health, free arm movement, and endurance. As the chest is not constricted, the lungs continue to furnish the normal supply of air. Since the circulation of blood to the head is not curtailed, vision is conserved. Because the muscles and organs are not cramped, bodily functions are not interfered with, and the greatest endurance is therefore made possible.

It would be manifestly ridiculous to try to teach all of these facts to little children. The best that can be done is to show them the correct position, and gradually correct their faults, one by one. Pupils are taught to write large at first, because it is conducive to freer movement and better control. However, the size of the letters is gradually reduced, until in the fifth or sixth year the style normally employed in business and social writing is used. Frequent practice at the blackboard is kept up for several grades. The following are among the chief difficulties encountered in learning to write:

1. To avoid resting the arm on the wrist and hand, and moving only the fingers while writing.

2. To make *correct* letter forms, and to maintain the right relative dimensions.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

3. To keep the writing straight.
4. To slant all the letters in the same direction.
5. To avoid back-hand writing.
6. To join letters properly.
7. To maintain uniform spacing.
8. To dot i's and j's and cross t's.

"A hopeless task!" an on-looker might well exclaim upon witnessing the first attempt of a class of beginners. Yet somehow through persistent effort, enthusiastic praise, well directed criticism, inexhaustible patience, the awarding of stars for good results, and displaying excellent papers in a conspicuous place, the First Grade teacher manages to give the great majority of her pupils an excellent start, which is ably supplemented by her successors in the Second and Third Grades.

Pupils usually begin using pen and ink in the last part of the Second Grade or the first term of the Third. Carefulness about moistening a new pen-point before using it, dipping it lightly into the ink, keeping both nibs of the pen squarely on the paper, and wiping the pen when the writing is finished, should all be urged at this time, since all are essential to the best results.

Although the typewriter is now almost exclusively used in business and professional

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

work and is even rapidly increasing in popularity for personal correspondence, the habit of good penmanship is an accomplishment which parents should want their children to cultivate. Advertisements often require applications for a position to be made in writing. In such instances good penmanship may be the deciding factor in winning or losing the job, and it is always a material help in keeping one. Illegible handwriting certainly detracts from the pleasure a friendly letter may give; it may also frequently be a cause of personal humiliation; while ability to write well will as often be a source of satisfaction.

Certainly if with the one-fortieth of the teacher's time to which a child is entitled at school, he is not making satisfactory progress in learning to write, parents may well be interested in supplementing his progress at home. The following are some of the ways in which this may be effectively done:

Showing interest in the child's daily progress at school, and giving enthusiastic praise or other reward for all good papers brought home.

Encouraging the use of the home black-board on rainy days and at other opportune times for drill in arm movement and writing. As the circular movement to the left is usually one of the most difficult parts for

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

children, practice on that may be especially helpful in the early grades.

Noting which of the difficulties enumerated above the child is making least progress in overcoming, and co-operating, as the teacher may suggest, to help secure the desired improvement.

Discouraging all careless and untidy writing at home, and heartily praising that which is of an opposite character.

In assisting a child to improve in penmanship, it is important for both teachers and parents to aim at some special point. Children may practice writing, for years, with the general idea of improving, and yet make little or no gain. Tangible progress is made by concentrating on *one fault at a time*, keeping up effort on that until the right habit is well begun; and then attacking the next most glaring weakness in a similar way.

### SPELLING

When Reading was taught by the Alphabet Method, Spelling was necessarily learned with that subject from the outset. For some years after the A, B, C Method became tabooed, little attention was given to Spelling, until work in composition and letter-writing was begun, which, as a rule, was in about the Third Grade. For children to continue to learn new words so long a time, without

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

having especial attention called to the individual letters composing them, was not conducive to good orthography, and unquestionably resulted in an unusually large number of poor spellers.

Fortunately, the pendulum, — as is often the case in educational methods, has swung back to a happy medium. As a rule, the letters are now known, and some drill in the spelling of easy words is given in the second term of the first grade, and of course much earlier where particular emphasis is placed on phonics.

While in recent years spelling-books have been prepared for Second and Third Grades, and at least one series has included words for first-year pupils, a special text-book for spelling is not used by pupils in many school systems until the Fourth or Fifth Grades. Previous to that time, teachers select the words for their classes to spell from the reading and other lessons, and in some grades partly from a Speller which is furnished the teacher. Easy one-syllable words are usually first selected, the more difficult ones being gradually introduced. Care is also taken to choose words that children will be able to use in their written composition.

The teacher first writes the words to be spelled on the blackboard, taking care to separate them into syllables and making

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

sure that the meaning of each is understood. Pupils spell and pronounce the words aloud, first with the teacher, and then collectively, or individually without her help; and sometimes, in this preliminary study, they also write the individual words, pronouncing each as it is being written. Both of these practices are excellent in making the ear sensitive to correct spelling, and should not be omitted. Special drill of this kind should be given on such words as *February*, *library*, and *government*, which are so often spelled "*Febuary*," "*libary*," and "*goverment*," largely because the one making the mistake has never sensed the correct pronunciation through the ear.

At the time the lesson is given out, attention is also called to silent letters (for example, *i* in *sail*, *e* in *gate*) and to groups of letters having the sound of one letter (for example, *igh* having the sound of *a* in *eighty*). These and other difficulties are usually underlined with colored chalk to help focus attention upon them.

Such well-known stumbling-blocks as *Tuesday*, *Wednesday*, *business*, and *biscuit* are heralded as 'Bad Indians, or some other variety of opponent interesting to children, and much enthusiasm is aroused for conquering these redoubtable enemies in the very first engagement.



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

One of the best exercises to make pupils proficient in spelling is drill in *rapid eye-perception work*. A word or a combination of letters not forming a word, — preferably the latter,—is written on the blackboard and quickly erased; the children are then required to tell the letters in the order they were written. Similar drill may also be given by using combinations of letters on cards. Another plan for this rapid perception work is to have children open books at a certain page, quickly glance at a readily located word which the teacher specifies, and then close the book instantly and give the order of the letters of the word mentioned. These exercises may all be conducted with such spirit as to seem as good fun as a game to children. The practice is exceedingly valuable, since ability to quickly perceive the letters of a word in their correct order is the most important habit in the process of learning to spell.

Efficient teachers also instruct their pupils concerning the following points with reference to the effective study of spelling:—

To discriminate as to *which* words of the assigned lesson one can already spell and to concentrate effort upon the *others*.

To judge what the *difficult* part of a word is and to learn to master that.

To look at a word carefully, then to close

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

the eyes and try to *picture* the *correct order* of the letters.

To spell words aloud to oneself by syllables and thus get the order of the letters correct through the *sense of hearing*.

After trying to fasten the correct order of the letters in the mind through the eye and the ear routes, to test the memory by trying to write several words on paper without looking at the book.

When one feels sure that all the words have been thoroughly learned, have some one at home pronounce them for a written lesson.

Pupils who follow the above plan in studying their spelling lessons are likely to become good spellers, because the effort they expend is well directed.

The *correction of written spelling lessons* is also a vital point. Misspelled words should be checked and a systematic plan should be followed for having the attack on them kept up by individual pupils until complete mastery is gained. To this end, pupils should not write Spelling lessons on loose paper which may be carelessly thrown away, but in permanent notebooks. The leaves of this book should not be torn out, and it should be carefully kept after all pages have been filled. In the back part of it, a few pages

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

should be reserved for a complete list of words misspelled in various lessons, so that they may often be reviewed and finally conquered. Perhaps the greatest help of all is to inspire children with genuine zest for continuing the attack upon a troublesome word and enthusiastic joy at its final mastery. "I've taken that hard old word into camp! It won't trouble me any more!" should be the joyous war song, as the pupil marches proudly on to further conquests in the spelling world.

It can be readily seen that teachers are working intelligently in anticipating the difficulties which English spelling presents to children, and in training pupils to gain the mastery. Nevertheless almost every class in almost every educational institution, be it elementary, high school, or college, has some pupils who are woefully poor spellers, and far too many others whose habits of orthography are not creditable. This may be due to large registration, especially in the early grades, where habits of work are so largely formed. No doubt some teachers are much less effective in teaching this subject than others. Whatever the cause may be, it is altogether likely that the intelligent co-operation of the home in the Spelling instruction might have proved the ounce of prevention.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

### HOW PARENTS MAY HELP IN SPELLING INSTRUCTION

See to it that their children absolutely know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, — not merely to repeat them glibly in order, but to distinguish each *instantly* from other letters bearing a close resemblance (for example, *d* from *b*, *k* from *h*, *u* from *n*, *q* from *g*). This may be done before the child attends school, or at least prior to his commencing to learn to spell. Blocks, spelling frame, cardboard letters, and newspaper headings are among the best aids. Having a child pick out a certain letter from the words in a brief paragraph, is also excellent practice, if the print is sufficiently large. Incidental practice will accomplish something. However, regular, systematic drill, five minutes daily, or several times a week, will rarely fail to bring the desired result.

Make sure that the child's lack of facility is not due to defective vision. Glasses will often convert an apparently hopeless spelling pupil into a most promising one, since correcting the astigmatic or other defect of the eye makes quick and accurate perception possible.

Keep in touch with the beginning and progress of the child's school work in spelling, and supplement wherever weakness is shown.

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

Should keenness of hearing be lacking, pronouncing the words aloud and spelling them by syllables with the child will help. If he is slow in noting the letters of a word in their correct order, then perception drills will be an aid. In case there is little system about his method of study, definite direction will improve that weakness. At any rate, enough interest should be taken to pronounce the words aloud, after he claims to have learned the lesson, not forgetting to give generous praise for good results and to require more effective preparation if there is evidence that it is needed.

### ARITHMETIC

Some decades ago arithmetic was taught chiefly through definitions, rules and drill. The various tables were recited and even sung in concert, forward and backward, times without number. Definitions and rules were learned letter perfect and glibly applied. Notation, Numeration, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Greatest Common Divisor, Least Common Multiple, Common Fractions, Decimal Fractions, and other topics were taken up in order, each one being intensively treated before the next was introduced. A pupil who attended only a certain part of a year often went over the same topics again and again.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Problem work was written on the slate or blackboard in the form that it was worked out, no special emphasis being placed upon orderly arrangement. In case of error, the infallible rule was conjured with to settle all doubts. Examples frequently dealt with unreasonably large numbers, and among the problems was a liberal sprinkling of more or less impractical puzzles which, in some conquering souls, inspired zest for finding something harder with which to stick the teacher. This was of course before the period when children balked at anything uninteresting or hard, and prior to the time when the simple amusements of the home ceased to furnish the chief diversion for leisure hours. A large percentage of those who finished this course in the elementary school at least gained a fair amount of accuracy in the fundamental processes, together with some ability and liking for independent work.

However, when educators began to take account of the teaching of the various elementary subjects from the child's point of view, it was readily discerned that teaching a subject abstractly by definition and rule was poor pedagogy. Gradually the study of arithmetic was put off until the second or third year. Object teaching and development work displaced the close adherence to

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

the hard and fast definitions and rules. The *Grube Method*, by which all the combinations with reference to one number are taught before the next is taken up, found favor in some schools, and was adapted in a modified way to the prevailing method in others. Paper superseded the slate as a medium for lesson preparation, and much emphasis began to be placed upon the orderly statement of a problem by steps with the operations indicated. Such points as always using the abstract number for a multiplier, or having one of the dimensions of a surface represent the number of square units in a row, and the other dimension, the number of rows of such units, were made more or less prominent.

Text-books prepared on the so-called Spiral Plan, first presenting a little of the various topics in a very elementary way, then going over the same field again with harder examples, and again, later, with others still more difficult, came much into vogue. One group of pedagogues exploited the theory that comparing geometric forms was the open sesame to a ready and thorough understanding of Arithmetic, while still another band of enthusiasts hailed early and frequent practice in measurements as the cure for all arithmetical ills. Each change had its ardent advocates and enthusiastic

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

converts. Each departure, if an advocated change gained enough headway to be dignified by such a term, was followed sooner or later by a reaction. Nevertheless each had some elements of good, and contributed something of value to the whole.

The inevitable result of such a changeable status, however, has been confusion, — confusion to teachers who have naturally felt that there was no firm arithmetical ground upon which to cast anchor; confusion to parents who have so often exclaimed impatiently, when children needed guidance at home but rejected the proffered help, since it lacked familiar ear-marks, "I can get the answer but I don't know how the teacher does it!"

Continued agitation is always upsetting, but it usually produces some genuine reform, and in this respect Arithmetic has been no exception. While probably each status described above may still prevail in some localities, it may be safely asserted that the following facts with reference to the teaching of Arithmetic are rapidly becoming recognized by thoughtful educators:—

Children in the First Grade have a natural interest in number because counting and very elementary addition are used in the games they play outside of school. A knowledge of small values is also necessary



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

in their trifling trades and purchases. Every day they can see that more knowledge of numbers will increase their ability to understand and to enjoy. Therefore systematic teaching of number is frequently begun in the first year of school. The maximum taught is usually counting, reading, and writing numbers to 100; the addition and subtraction facts to 20; the fraction  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; the foot, inch, pint, and quart, under measures; the small coins children are likely to use; counting by 10's, 5's, and 2's to 100. In some schools, the addition and subtraction facts to 10 or 12 are the limit. There are also some that include the multiplication facts as well as those of addition and subtraction.

As a rule, a text-book is not placed in the hands of children until the Third Grade. Teachers develop the number ideas through the use of lines, splints, and other objects, the figures and names being learned from the blackboard. Splints, sticks, inch cubes, foot-rules, marked in inches, pint and quart measures, and toy money are among the most commonly used illustrative material in this grade. Number card exercises, playing store, folding paper, and various other activities and games are utilized for drill.

In the Second Grade, counting and reading and writing numbers are extended to

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

200 or beyond; addition and subtraction facts include the forty-five combinations; the easier multiplication tables, often the 2's and 5's, or the 2's, 5's, and 3's, are learned; and some new facts within the child's experience and understanding are added to each of the other lines of work introduced in the First Grade.

Reading and writing numbers to 10,000 or higher, Roman notation, at least as far as the children's experience requires the information, and the completion of the multiplication tables constitute the chief additional subject matter for the Third Grade. One-step, and in some schools, two-step problems are also used for oral and written statement in this year's work.

The advantages of this course for the primary grades over the old-time formal rule and definition method can be readily noted. The subject matter is within the comprehension of pupils and supplies a real need in their lives. Discrimination has been used in proceeding from the simple to the more difficult, and in eliminating unreasonably large numbers and impractical or useless problems and topics.

Nevertheless parents and teachers both know that arithmetic is a subject in which the final results in our elementary schools

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

to-day are not satisfactory. The old nursery rhyme, —

“ Multiplication is vexation,  
Division is as bad;  
The rule of three doth trouble me,  
And fractions make me mad.”

has just as wide an appeal among the youth of to-day as it has ever had. Far too many young folk go into business life inaccurate in the abstract fundamental processes. Perhaps an even larger number leave school practically helpless in mastering problems that are stated differently from those they have already solved, or that depart even in a slight degree from the line of reasoning over which they have been personally conducted and drilled by a patient teacher. The question of developing better reasoning power will be taken up in a succeeding chapter, as it chiefly concerns grades beyond the third. Habits that lead to facility in accurate computation are largely formed in the first three years and therefore should be considered here.

The question naturally arising at the outset is, why, if the subject matter is selected more intelligently and presented more interestingly, are the results not better than they were under the old method?

Of course new subjects of study have come in to divide the time, but this alone is not

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

the reason. Perhaps too many Arithmetic topics are introduced in a term. Possibly in the revulsion from the abstract, unscientific way of teaching Arithmetic, some really valuable features, such as frequent oral repetition of number combinations and long-continued drill on abstract fundamental processes, have been too little employed. It may be that an unnecessary amount of time is spent in object development, or on the numerous games and other devices used for applying the number facts taught. Very likely, in many instances, classes are so large that pupils naturally backward in number can not be given the attention they require.

Whatever the cause may be, the remedy is unquestionably certain. Teachers and parents must agree that the essential part of the term's work is the automatic quick and accurate oral and written expression of the number facts taught; that the reasoning and information part of the course may well, if necessary, bide its time until later, but that facility and accuracy in computing numbers, as far as it extends in that particular term, must be gained. If the instruction at school accomplishes that result, very well; if it fails to do so, then the work of the teacher must be supplemented at home.

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

There are various ways in which parents may be serviceable in this process. The first is to keep familiar with what their children are being taught at school in counting and in addition and multiplication combinations, and to let them know that genuine interest is taken at home in their mastering these perfectly. Then children should have practice at home in counting and in the number facts taught, pains being taken to commend creditable accuracy and speed.

As the addition and multiplication combinations are taught, sets of number cards with which to train the eye should be prepared. For example, when the ten addition facts with reference to 2 have been taught, ten pieces, about 7 inches by 4 inches, should be cut out of cardboard, and a different combination written on each in large figures ( $\frac{2}{3}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{5}$ ). On the opposite side of the card, the right answer should be noted, so that the one who is testing with them can instantly tell if the answer the child gives is correct. Testing with these is excellent practice, if the pupil is trained to answer as quickly as possible the second the card is held up to view. As soon as answers come readily when the cards are shown forward and backward, they should, as a rule, be used out of regular rotation, since numbers encoun-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

tered in actual business transactions rarely have figures in regular order.

Writing the numbers from 0 to 12 out of regular order on the blackboard, and then requiring pupils to give the answers rapidly when a specified number is added, subtracted, or used as a multiplier, is also excellent practice. The pupil may give the answers orally, or step to the blackboard and write them as quickly as possible. When an instructor is sure that pupils are able to distinguish figures rapidly, the repetition of the expression, " $2+5=7$ ," " $5\times 8=40$ ," should not be allowed; the answer 7, or 40 should be given without preliminary statement. This makes for quicker thinking, and hence for greater accuracy and speed.

In column addition, greater rapidity may likewise be cultivated, if the practice of pointing out the figures while pupils add is soon discarded. While the teacher allows the pointer to rest upon the various figures, the children's minds naturally pause. A better plan is to give the direction, add this column (up or down, as the teacher may prefer).

An exercise having the numbers from 0 to 12 arranged in a circle on the blackboard with the number to be added, subtracted, or used as a multiplier in the center, is much

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

used in schools. This is popular because of its novelty, but it is not so good as the plan suggested above, since in actual business life numbers are not arranged in circular order for the fundamental processes.

A vital point to be applied in this early instruction is not to let a pupil grope for or guess at an answer. Should his hesitation be due to inattention, greater concentration should be stimulated. If he really does not know the correct fact, it should be told him. If time will permit, however, care should be taken to ask him that same combination several times before the close of the recitation.

Having pupils race, either in writing the tables or in noting the answers when numbers from 0 to 12 have been written out of order on the blackboard, arouses enthusiastic interest and is an excellent exercise. Number combination contests, like spelling matches, also arouse a high pitch of enthusiasm for the work.

Some of the games which are not practical for extensive use with a large class in school may be very profitably used at home. The bean-bag game is one of the most interesting. A pine box with a sloping top large enough to contain four or more holes marked 2, 4, 5, or whatever number each is to count, providing the bean bag is pitched into it, is

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

placed about five feet away. Each child in the game has a turn at pitching the bags and may keep his own score, or a pupil not pitching may act as scorekeeper. An oblong floor space divided into squares may be used for the game but will not answer the purpose so well as the box. Additional interest in the game and more practice in Arithmetic are both afforded, if one or more of the holes or spaces count minus 2, 3, or some other number. Ring Toss, too, may be used in a similar way, 5 being counted when the ring goes over the post, 3 when it rests against it, 2 when it is within a foot of the post, and minus 1 when it is more than a foot away. Other numbers should be substituted for the ones enumerated after facility in computing the score with these has been gained. Children need no urging to take part in this sort of Arithmetic, and with the exception of an umpire for an occasional disputed point, will require little supervision while engaged in it. Parents who are interested may find numerous suggestions along this line in "Journeys in Numberland," "Work and Play With Numbers," and "Everyday Arithmetic."

*The Austrian Method of Subtraction* is used in many schools, and should be universally introduced, since it saves learning subtraction tables. For instance, in taking 42 from



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

86, the example is written down as usual

$$\begin{array}{r} 86 \\ 42 \\ \hline 44 \end{array}$$

but instead of saying 2 from 6 leaves 4, and 4 from 8 leaves 4, the pupil is taught to say 4 plus 2 equals 6, and 4 plus 4 equals 8, placing each figure thus used in its correct place in the answer. Briefly stated, the pupil writes in units place of the remainder the figure that added to units place of the subtrahend will give the units figure of the minuend, and so on with tens, hundreds, etc. In an example involving borrowing, such as

$$\begin{array}{r} 32 \\ 13 \\ \hline 19 \end{array}$$

beginning pupils would write the example

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \quad 12 \\ 1 \quad 3 \\ \hline 1 \quad 9 \end{array}$$

and in explanation say, "32 equals 2 tens and 12 units, 9 units and 3 units are 12 units; 1 ten and 1 ten are 2 tens."

If a clerk is given a dollar bill for 34 cents' worth, he does not mentally or on paper put the 34 under 100 and subtract. He says, "34 and 16 are 50 and 50 are 100," and probably gives a dime, a nickel, 1 cent, and 2 quarters or a fifty-cent piece in change.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Persons constantly making change do this way automatically, because it is easier and more accurate. This is a strong reason for saving children the time and effort required to memorize subtraction tables, and concentrating their attention upon addition. In preparation for this work, a child should be asked, when he learns an addition combination,—for example, 5 and 3 are 8, or 6 and 4 are 10,—what number added to 3 makes 8; what number added to 6 makes 10?

So also while teaching the multiplication facts, the way should be paved for division by asking, for example, when 4 times 9 or 8 times 5 are taught, not only 4 times 9 are how many? or 8 times 5 are how many? but also, how many 4's in 36? how many 5's in 40?

Finally, the idea that accuracy and facility in computation need be hard or impossible for any normal child, should be banished from the home and from the school. Instead of allowing children to become imbued with the idea that there are so many abstract facts to learn that they cannot possibly remember them, make them at once realize the fact that there are only forty-five addition combinations and forty-five multiplication combinations, that do not appear in previous tables, and that all others are simply repetitions.

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

They will be surprised to find that there are only forty-five different addition facts and forty-five in multiplication, and will likewise be quite ashamed that they have failed to master so small a number. Considering the fact that there are really so few abstract combinations to be automatically used, it seems absolutely unnecessary for children to leave school without knowing them perfectly. As in other attainments, however, the right start is essential for gaining creditable skill. That start should and may be gained in the first three grades, if teachers and parents will only make it the goal, and co-operate effectively to achieve the desired end.

### ORAL LANGUAGE

In the first three grades pupils are given practice in Oral Language through conversation about personal experiences, animals, and other interesting topics; by reproducing stories they have heard; by describing familiar objects; and in the Second and Third grades, by telling in their own words the thought of a paragraph or more of the reading lesson.

Good tone of voice and correctness of speech are emphasized in this work, but to prevent self-consciousness and lack of freedom, criticisms are usually withheld until

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

individual recitations are completed. In this work it is also well to concentrate criticism upon a few points until improvement is shown in them, after which others may be profitably included.

These early years are the period in which to lay the foundations for correct habits of speech. Accordingly all of the points with reference to pronunciation and enunciation mentioned in this chapter under Reading and many additional ones should be emphasized, and children should be made to say the correct form again and again. Correct grammar should likewise be given attention in a similar way from the outset.

Children who are naturally backward in expressing themselves, or who have poor enunciation or other faults of speech, may profitably be given practice in Oral Language at home. The story-telling hours furnish excellent opportunities for this. Encouraging a child to tell the story to which he has just listened, and correcting the faults of speech as suggested, will often accomplish great improvement.

A multiplicity of *ands* is often the chief error children make in such oral language practice. They should be shown how, by letting the voice fall and starting a new sentence, this fault may often be avoided. If the too frequent use of "and" is still

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

continued, as pupils advance in the grades, fables and other short selections should be used for reproduction, and the direction given, "Tell this story, using *and* a certain number of times (for example, no more than twice)." The *And* game in which another child is allowed to go on with the recitation, if the pupil reciting uses *and* more than the specified number of times, often makes pupils more keen on this point.

### WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Copying sentences which the teacher writes on the blackboard or on individual papers is the beginning of written composition. First-Year pupils do this very nicely. They also get the idea of commencing proper names and the first word of a sentence with a capital letter. The use of a period and an exclamation mark to close a complete statement and the interrogation point to end a question, are also taught them. Writing original questions or statements about some object is likewise frequently done in First Year.

In Second Grade pupils soon gain the power to combine several brief sentences about the same thing into a paragraph. Later they also write short paragraphs of their own. A reproduction of something

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

brief that has been told is usually the beginning. Telling what one has done, facts about some person, animal, or thing, and brief descriptions of familiar objects readily follow. In all such work, care should be taken to precede the written expression with oral composition.

Letter Writing is usually commenced in the latter part of Second or the beginning of Third Grade. This practice furnishes additional interest and stimulus, since its practical use can be so readily appreciated. As to the mechanics of written composition, leaving an equal margin on both sides of the sheet (three-quarters of an inch is a good amount), having the margin at the bottom reasonably commensurate with that at the top, indenting the first line of a paragraph an inch or more from the margin, and closing sentences with period, question mark, or exclamation point, are the chief things emphasized.

The following mistakes are likely to be made in this beginning work. Pleased by the free expression and vivid imagination shown in the written composition of pupils, teachers often place too little emphasis upon mechanical correctness. It is excellent to encourage freedom and quantity of expression in Oral Language. In Written Composition, however, brief paragraphs, as nearly

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

correct as possible, should be the aim at first.

A uniform standard as to heading, margin, and other points, is lacking in too many schools. For instance, a Third Grade teacher may have her pupils leave a three-fourths inch margin on both sides of the page, while a Fourth or Fifth Grade instructor may require a margin only on the left side. In one class the heading of a letter may be written in three lines; in another, in two; and in still another, in one line. Again in one class a comma may be used after the street, city, state, and day of month, and a period after the year; while, in a higher class, a comma after the city and one after the day of month may be the only punctuation employed. Pupils should be told that both ways are in accordance with good usage, but one form should be used throughout the grades in order that a right punctuation habit may be established.

It is not sufficient simply to show pupils the right form or punctuation a few times. They should absolutely memorize the facts taught, and not be allowed to go on from grade to grade omitting or misusing them. When the faculties of elementary schools decide upon definite facts of form and punctuation which pupils are to be held accountable for in each grade, and have these

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

memorized at the time they are taught and frequently reviewed until they are used automatically, Grammar Grade and High School pupils will make fewer errors in these purely mechanical points.

Often the cultivation of correct judgment as to where one sentence ends and a new one begins (spoken of as sentence sense) is not made one of the fundamental aims in early composition work. Pupils are allowed to drift along and gain it somehow from the corrections on written papers. Now a pupil can really be credited with but very little actual progress until this sense is developed, at least to a fair degree, since without it there is indeed very small foundation on which to build. Therefore definite, progressive effort must be made to cultivate this power.

In developing sentence sense it is a great help for children to have their attention frequently called to the fact that where the voice naturally falls, when reading aloud, a sentence should usually be ended and a new one begun. Copying a brief paragraph from a book, then writing the same from memory, and afterward comparing it with the original with reference to the beginning and ending of sentences, is good practice. Probably the best exercise of all to develop accurate sentence sense is to have pupils write unpunctuated paragraphs which the



## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

teacher has placed on the blackboard or mimeographed on paper, and put in the capital letters and punctuation marks necessary to make good sense. If pains are taken to have such paragraphs progressive as to length and variety of sentences, this exercise may be made very helpful, since it not only tests pupils' judgment but also emphatically illustrates how little sense words make without the necessary capital letters and closing marks of punctuation. The dictation of brief paragraphs may also be helpful in developing this sense, especially during the period when an effort is being made to train pupils to connect the falling of the voice in reading aloud with the use of a closing mark.

There is too much useless correction of written compositions. Teachers frequently note too many points in their corrections; too often they also write in the correct capital letter, punctuation, or spelling, and require pupils to rewrite the corrected manuscript. This children frequently do carelessly, making the same mistakes or even worse ones, and the result is that little or no progress is made. Some benefit may be more or less automatically absorbed, but it is certainly not through the exercise of thought on the part of pupils.

It is far better to concentrate on a few points,—for instance, through the Fifth

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Grade, on the capital letter to begin a proper name and the first word of a sentence, and the period, question mark, or exclamation point to close a sentence; and *not* to make the definite correction on the paper. Instead, a question mark should be placed in the margin opposite the lines in which a capital letter may be needed, also a plus sign, if a necessary closing mark has not been used; and any misspelled words which children should have written correctly should be underlined.

The next exercise will of course be to have pupils find out and correct their mistakes. At first it is necessary for teachers to guide in this work, by copying paragraphs or sentences from pupils' papers on the black-board, and piloting them in finding the errors, but at the same time compelling original thinking as far as possible. Gradually pupils will learn to find mistakes for themselves, and will later be fitted for independent corrections. From the outset much emphasis should be placed upon forming the habit of carefully re-reading and correcting one's own written papers before handing them to the teacher, thus avoiding the careless errors that often attend the first writing. This habit of second careful consideration is a very valuable one, and these early years are the best time to start it. If this standard

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

of painstaking, careful effort is maintained both in school and at home, and the penalty of re-writing unfailingly follows any careless or untidy work, creditable progress will be made.

### GEOGRAPHY

Usually a text-book in Geography is not used by children until the last term of the third year or the beginning of the fourth. Considerable preparatory information is, however, incidentally taught in connection with Reading and Language, and such words as *here, there, above, below, up, down, before, behind, right and left*, which must be known to understand position and direction, are in the usual First Grade vocabulary. The cardinal points and their use in locating objects in the schoolroom and neighborhood are generally taught in the Second Year. "Seven Little Sisters," "Each and All," and other books giving simple and interesting descriptions of the homes and lives of little folk in various parts of the world, are also read in Second Grade; and in their Drawing and Manual Training, pupils in these classes often illustrate the homes, utensils, and lives of the interesting people with whom they thus become acquainted.

In Third Grade, pupils frequently begin to observe weather conditions, noting tempera-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

ture, winds, the varying time of sunrise and sunset, the position of the sun in the heavens, the shadow cast by the sun, change of seasons, and other points. To broaden children's ideas of the largeness of the world and the various conditions of life in its different parts, "Around the World" (Carroll), "Little Folks of Many Lands" (Chance), and other books may be read. To emphasize the need of home, food, and shelter, an abridged account of Robinson Crusoe's adventures is sometimes read and discussed. Home Geography is often a part of the work of this grade. In this connection, pupils learn to make maps of the schoolroom, school-yard, and the region in which the school is located; the climate, prevailing wind, soil, vegetable products, and important manufactures are talked about. How the latter are transported to other places and how local needs are supplied by shipments from distant regions are also considered. Why local government is needed, and an elementary idea of what it is, may likewise be developed. Thus by examining and considering local conditions which pupils are naturally interested in and can more or less readily understand, a foundation is laid for the study of world geography which will soon follow.

The great majority of children like geography because it unfolds so much new informa-

## THE FIRST THREE GRADES

---

tion to them. They are especially interested in the lives and homes of children of other lands, and frequently take even greater delight in books containing this information than they do in fairy stories. In addition to the books already mentioned under this topic, Shaw's "Big People and Little People of Other Lands," Schwatka's "Children of the Cold," Allen's "Children of the Palm Land," Miller's "Little People of Asia," Lane's "The Wide World," and Chase's "Stories of Industries," all contain interesting information. Parents will find these and other books of a similar character excellent to read aloud to little folk at home. In fact some of these volumes are so interesting and so simple in style that many children will read them without the help of parents.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOME CO-OPERATION IN THE FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH SCHOOL YEARS — THE IN- INTERMEDIATE GRADES

**A**S children advance in school, more difficult lessons are assigned them, and they are expected to depend less and less upon the teacher in preparing their work. Bearing this fact in mind and likewise remembering how early in life habits are formed and how tenaciously they cling, it is plain that the Intermediate years furnish the best opportunities for clinching fundamental points and habits which pupils have failed to gain in preceding grades.

#### READING

In Primary Grades, Reading is given by far the largest share of time in the daily program; the subject is taught with great spirit and enthusiasm, and pupils are kept eager to learn the *new words* of the various lessons.

In the Fourth and succeeding grades, however, Arithmetic, Geography, Spelling, and other subjects in which accountability for results may be more definitely fixed,

#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

crowd the program. Pupils in these grades have a comparatively large vocabulary and considerable facility in judging the pronunciation of new words; and since some teachers are inclined to let the Reading recitation lapse into a more or less perfunctory word-pronunciation period, children find it easy to slip through with little or no preparation, and so neglect the subject.

When the intensive study of a poem, novel, or play is begun in the Eighth Grade or in First Year High School, teachers are often astonished at the large number of commonly used words of whose meaning many pupils seem entirely ignorant and at the inability of the great majority to get the thought quickly and correctly from the printed page. The reason probably is that for several years past, instead of intelligently studying the reading lesson and making new words a part of their vocabulary by learning to use them, pupils have been allowed to progress with merely showing more or less facility in pronouncing words.

The failure of children to understand the meaning of new words and to get the thought of the text which so many hours of the school day are spent in reading, is undoubtedly one of the most serious defects of Primary School instruction. It accounts not only for the weakness mentioned in connection with

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Eighth Grade and High School literature instruction, but also primarily for the failures in the reasoning part of Arithmetic, and in all studies in which successful progress depends largely upon ability to understand the thought expressed on the printed page.

A little extra foresight and planning on the part of teachers will to a great extent correct this weakness. Instead of merely calling attention to a few new words and giving some drill in pronouncing them, care should be taken when assigning new lessons from at least the Third through the Eighth Grades to write on the board a number of questions that will insure an acquaintance with the important words of the lesson, and compel an intensive preliminary reading in study-time to gain the thought expressed in the text.

For example, in assigning a lesson to a Fifth Grade Class on *Prince Charlie*, a selection from Louisa Alcott's *Little Men*, which tells how Dan, one of the "difficult" boys of the Plumfield school, trained Mr. Laurie's spirited colt to submit to saddle and bridle, questions like the following may be profitably used:

1. What was Prince Charlie, and who owned him?
2. How did Dan first make friends with Prince Charlie?



## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

3. Briefly describe Dan's failures in trying to conquer his new friend.

4. What plan finally helped Dan to succeed?

5. How did Mr. Laurie show that he was pleased with Dan's achievement?

6. Give an antonym of *handsome*, *harshly*, *topmost*, *patiently*, *permit*.

7. Mention a synonym of *palaver*, *affection*, *intelligent*, *confidence*, *frightened*.

8. Name the page and paragraph in which each of the following expressions is found, and state the thought of each in a different way:—

(a) *Accompany him*

(b) *Broken to harness*

(c) *Took possession of the boy*

(d) *Obeded the impulse*

(e) *Deposited Dan on the ground*

(f) *Go through dangers unscathed*

(g) *After a few fits of rebellion, Charlie submitted.*

In preparing questions such as 6, 7, and 8, care should be taken to have the various groups of words included come in the order of the narrative, so that there need be no unnecessary difficulty in finding each in the text. After some practice in this kind of preparation, one careful reading ought to enable pupils to answer questions like the first five, and one or more hasty additional

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

scannings should suffice to answer such questions as 7, 8, and 9. While the dictionary will be frequently needed in preparing such a lesson, careful study of the context will often suffice, if the teacher wisely anticipates difficulties in her preliminary work.

Although the terms *antonym* and *synonym* may seem large for young children, they are great time-savers for teachers in finding out if pupils understand the vocabulary of the text that is being read. They may be used to advantage as early as Second A or Third B Grade, and should be frequently employed, not only in questions assigned with the Reading lesson, but also during the Reading recitation.

It requires little imagination to see what haphazard, superficial habits of reading are likely to be cultivated when children hastily glance over their lesson simply to be able to say they have read it, or to gain sufficient familiarity with the text to make a fair guess, if called upon to recite. Aside from cultivating quicker and more accurate thought-getting and a far wider vocabulary, the plan for Reading study herein suggested will also aid greatly in developing the memory faculty, — a by-product which in itself is very well worth while. Aiming to add a few new words to the vocabulary each week, and keeping pupils enthusiastic for making such

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

complete conquests of these additions as to be able to use them correctly in conversation and writing, may be made a most helpful feature of the proposed plan. Young folk would think a bicycle of little value if they did not learn to ride it. They can likewise be made to realize that ability to recognize a word is of little account, unless one understands its meaning and can spell and use it correctly in speaking and writing.

School visitors often find it difficult to understand the recitations of pupils because of indistinct speech. The cause of this is usually that pupils do not open their mouths widely enough in speaking. That the mouth should be open at least the width of two fingers while speaking or singing should be daily emphasized from the First Grade until the habit is formed. Occasional spirited drill in giving the scale in concert with Italian *a* or with *oo* sound, and exercises in pronouncing final consonants, both help in overcoming this defect. Having pupils stand in front of the class and realize that it is not their business just to say the words over, but to read in such a way as to interest their most distant classmates, is likewise helpful in getting better voice and better reading. Reading aloud at home for a few moments each day is an excellent plan, and one that is sure to result in marked improvement, if

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

some adult member of the family will take the time to listen and give suggestions and commendation. After leaving school both men and women who are ambitious for positions in which the good use of voice is necessary, frequently spend much time and money to overcome faulty habits of speech. The intelligent co-operation of parents in this feature of instruction, during the early years of school, will make much of this later preparation unnecessary.

Learning to use the dictionary is a part of Intermediate Grade work that is often very inadequately done. Far too frequently pupils are asked to buy a dictionary, the teacher in a more or less cursory way tells how to use it, and thereafter takes for granted that good use is being made of this valuable book. As a matter of fact, however, the dictionary contains so much that was not explained that pupils do not understand how to consult it intelligently, and are likely soon to cease trying to do so. This is most unfortunate, because rapid and intelligent use of this useful reference book is one of the very best habits that can be formed in school, and with reasonable care and perseverance on the part of teachers the right start can be readily given.

Before dictionaries are supplied, teachers should make sure that every child knows

#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

the alphabet perfectly. Then such lists of words as *clean, camp, clear, couch, come, capture, coarse, cucumber, childish, century, and cabbage* should be given to pupils to arrange in alphabetical order, every letter of each word being considered. After facility in alphabetical arrangement has been gained, the dictionary itself should be introduced. Pupils should be taught that if the letter index is printed on the edges of the sheets, one simply needs to put his thumb on the initial letter he is seeking, open the book and quickly find the word; or, in case there is no outside index, to open the book, hastily run the pages through the fingers until the desired letter is reached, and then locate the word. Pupils should be taught that the two words printed in extra large type a little above each column of definitions show the *first* and the *last* words defined on that page. Drill in finding specified words should then be given, and since pupils take great delight in seeing which row of the room can do best in this practice, they soon gain facility in it.

In Primary Grades pupils have become familiar with the marks that indicate the long and short sounds of vowels, also with syllables and accent marks. Now with open dictionaries in hand, their attention should be directed to the pronunciation indicated in the parentheses immediately following the

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

words and also to the pronunciation key-words at the bottom of each page. The latter should be pronounced and studied until they are well understood, after which a few lessons in using the dictionary to tell the pronunciation of unfamiliar words should follow. The fact that when more than one pronunciation of a word is given, the first is the preferred one, should be explained at this time. Pupils will readily understand the abbreviation for part of speech, immediately following the indicated pronunciation, but they should be instructed to pass hastily over the information concerning the derivation of the word, as this is too difficult at this time.

The fact that several meanings are given often puzzles children. They should be told that the most common meanings, as a rule, are printed first, that it is necessary to use judgment in deciding which is the best one for the word in question, and why those marked "*Obsl.*," "*Rare*," or "*Colloq.*" should not, as a rule, be chosen. Practice should then be given in finding the most suitable definitions of new words selected from the reading and other lessons, pupils being encouraged to consult the teacher concerning unfamiliar abbreviations or any other points in the dictionary which are not understood. With such preliminary information and prac-

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

tice, pupils will be well started in using the dictionary, and with the right encouragement from parents and teachers they are likely to make it a life-long aid to accurate scholarship.

### PENMANSHIP

One of the chief obstacles to forming the habit of good penmanship in schools is the prevalence of two standards of writing. One, the scratch variety, is often allowed in copying assigned lessons, notes, first drafts of compositions, and various written work. The other, which might be called the extra effort variety, is reserved for the copy book and for written lessons handed in to the teacher.

The scratch variety of penmanship first develops in the Intermediate Grades, and increases, term by term, in amount until High School is completed, while the use of copy books often ends with Sixth or Seventh Grade. Since two-thirds of a pupil's handwriting in school is of the scratch kind, the fact that the habit of good legible penmanship is not formed is certainly not to be wondered at.

The most important thing with reference to Penmanship in the Intermediate Grades, then, is for parents and teachers to prevent pupils from getting started in the scratch

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

writing habit. Parents should insist that their children, instead of scribbling lesson assignments, the first draft of compositions, arithmetic and other lessons on scraps of paper, should write them with reasonable care in notebooks which may be inspected at home. If a creditable effort is insisted upon from the beginning both in school and at home, and no careless written work of any kind is accepted, a rapid, legible hand will in time be formed. The only excuse for scratch writing is possible time saved. That the extra effort required later to decipher the scribble more than counterbalances any time gained in the writing will be readily comprehended by children, if their attention is called to the fact.

Besides preventing careless writing, parents should note which of the difficulties enumerated under Penmanship in the preceding chapter are not being overcome and join with teachers in having these perseveringly attacked, one by one, until all are creditably conquered. The secret of success is to have the pupil know the definite point in which he is expected to improve, and to understand that he will be kept at it until the desired improvement is achieved. All assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, if parents are systematic in planning, there is opportunity at home for necessary lesson



## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

tasks without in the least infringing upon the play or sleeping hours of children. Play is naturally more pleasant than work, and if children realize that a poor effort of any kind must be supplemented by a more effective one, they will earnestly try to make their first attempts satisfactory so that more time may be available for play.

### SPELLING

While it would be fine to be able to spell all words correctly, the numerous difficulties of the English language make it impossible for schools to give their graduates such an equipment. The next best thing is for pupils to be able to spell automatically the words commonly used in correspondence, and to form the habit, when writing, of consulting the dictionary for any words of whose spelling they are in doubt. In the preparation of recently published spelling books, business and social correspondence, newspapers and magazines have been carefully studied to select the most commonly used words. These words have been carefully considered with reference to the difficulties they present to students, and care has been taken to repeat the harder ones in the text again and again. The advantages of such a speller over one that contains a large number of infrequently used words, prepared

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

with little or no thought about overcoming difficulties through frequent repetition, are very great. Since the use of a speller by children is usually begun in the Intermediate Grades, one of the very best ways parents can help the work in this period is to urge school officials to supply a text-book in this subject that will make for economy and effectiveness of effort, providing such a one is not already in use.

An important point to be kept in mind with reference to this subject is that written spelling, not oral, is the essential thing to learn. Except in a contest, one rarely has to spell orally and might converse by the hour without experiencing the slightest embarrassment at not being able to spell a single word used. On this account training in spelling should be very largely through writing words. To be sure, the practice of spelling words aloud to get the order of the letters correctly through the ear, suggested in the preceding chapter, should be continued, and oral spelling matches to stimulate interest should also be held. However they should not be conducted too frequently, and both the date of the match and the words to be spelled should be announced some days in advance. Great interest may be aroused in such contests, if they are skilfully managed. Pupils may select the words likely to cause

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

difficulty and give special study to them; the good spellers will drill the poorer ones, and all work together enthusiastically for victory.

### ARITHMETIC

If pupils have not mastered the addition and multiplication combinations by the time they have reached the Intermediate Grades, it is difficult for teachers to make up the deficiency, as the time required to cover the large amount of subject matter in the various new studies introduced in these years leaves little opportunity for the individual drill and careful following-up which are necessary to clinch this work with such pupils. Since facility and accuracy in the fundamental number combinations are essential to success in many positions young folk are likely to take when they enter business life, it is a real misfortune for them to leave school without having gained this ability.

Parents who wish their children to be without such a handicap should earnestly co-operate with teachers along the lines suggested under Arithmetic in the last chapter. Persevering and enthusiastic interest will accomplish wonders at home with one or two, when a teacher with a dozen or more delinquents will find it quite impossible to follow up each individual case until the desired end is gained.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Next to cultivating mastery of the fundamental processes, the most important point in the arithmetic work of the Intermediate Grades is to get children properly started in reasoning. Of course teachers do instruct their classes in this important matter, but some pupils fail to comprehend directions. Without fully understanding the language of the problem, they multiply or divide, add or subtract, as the spirit moves, and are satisfied with any result, no matter how disproportionate it may be. Frequent repetition of this aimless guesswork makes it a habit; the child gets the idea that he cannot understand problems, and so goes on floundering all through his mathematical course.

The following plan for attacking a problem should be taught at the outset, and emphasized and re-emphasized until it becomes an established habit of work:—

1. Read the problem carefully, making sure that every word is understood and that the meaning of the whole is clear.

2. Thoughtfully answer the following questions:—

- (a) What is given?

- (b) What is to be found? Will it be larger or smaller than what is given? What operations are necessary?

3. Estimate the answer.

#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

This plan of attack gives a solid basis for reasoning and a state of mind conducive to clear thinking and reasonable conclusions. By following such a method many hopeless pupils in Grammar Grade and High School mathematics may be prevented.

Another important point to be kept in mind with reference to problem work is that reasoning in examples involving small numbers is much easier for children than it is when larger numbers are employed. Authors of text-books recognize this fact by preceding the more difficult "*Written Problems*" with a group of "*Oral Exercises*" in which small numbers are used. For various reasons, these Oral Problems often receive far too little attention in school; or, if they are duly considered, it is difficult for a teacher to make absolutely certain that each one of forty or more pupils has grasped the point of reasoning involved.

If parents find their children floundering in Arithmetic problem work, a very good way to help is to get them started on some systematic, logical plan of reasoning, and then to confine their attention to problems involving small numbers until the new step is understood, when they can successfully attack similar problems involving larger numbers.

If the best results are to be attained in teaching Arithmetic, two other points must

also be kept in mind. Certain concise rules of procedure must be absolutely learned. Enough practice on a topic to fix it well in mind must be given before a new one is introduced.

It is bad pedagogy to have children learn rules that have not been reasonably well developed and understood, as was done years ago. It is also a waste of time to have rules or processes memorized, — the fundamental operations, for example, — in which so much practice will be given that pupils are sure to work them the right way automatically. However, in such topics as the various cases of multiplication and division of common fractions, pointing off in multiplication and division of decimal fractions, finding the area of a surface, the cubic contents of a solid, the number of feet of lumber by board measure, and others of a similar character, the rule should be learned, and if the text expresses it concisely, there is no good reason for not requiring the language of the book, after its meaning has been made clear. If a process has once been thoroughly understood, and afterward the verbal description of it has been well memorized, no matter how remote the time may be when one needs to use the principle, the rule will quickly recall the method of attack.

Only a cursory examination of some of the

#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

so-called "spiral plan" Arithmetics is necessary to find out how impossible it is for children to gain a thorough preparation in the essential processes from them, if the topics are taught in the order they are printed in the text. First a bite of one topic is given and then a taste of another, followed by various other samplings, all in such close rotation that sufficient time is not even allowed for mastication, to say nothing of digestion and assimilation. The fact is that in breaking away from the more or less stilted and over-laden topical plan, some authors have attained an opposite extreme, which is decidedly less effective even than that which it was intended to supplant. If such books are being used in a school, the text should not be taught in the order in which it appears in the book; but, by skipping intervening pages, a topic should be followed until pupils have had enough drill to fix the process well in mind.

Parents are often discouraged in trying to help in the Arithmetic home work because children insist that their way of doing examples is not like the one the teacher uses, and so will not be accepted at school. As a matter of fact, the parent's reasoning, which of course is the chief thing, is very likely correct, the difference usually being in the form of statement used. For instance,

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

in a problem involving Division, the parent may have set the work down

$$125) \$564,000 (\$4,512 \text{ Ans.}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 500 \\ \hline 640 \\ 625 \\ \hline 150 \\ 125 \\ \hline 250 \\ 250 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Now in modern arithmetics, the quotient is placed above the dividend, instead of at the right of it; and so appears quite different to children, as can be readily seen.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$4,512 \text{ Ans.} \\ 125 \overline{) \$564,000} \\ \underline{500} \\ 640 \\ \underline{625} \\ 150 \\ \underline{125} \\ 250 \\ \underline{250} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

If division of decimal fractions is involved, the parent may follow the rule, "Point off as many places in the quotient as the number



#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

of decimal places in the dividend exceeds those in the divisor," as arithmetics formerly taught, and write the work like this, —

$$\begin{array}{r} .25 \overline{) 62.525} \phantom{=} (250.1 \\ \underline{50} \phantom{00} \\ 125 \phantom{00} \\ \underline{125} \phantom{00} \\ 25 \phantom{00} \\ \underline{25} \phantom{00} \end{array}$$

but since the teacher has instructed pupils to put the numbers down and make the divisor a whole number by multiplying both it and the dividend by 100, and then working as follows: —

$$\begin{array}{r} .25 \overline{) 62.525} = \\ \phantom{.25 \overline{) 62.525}} 250.1 \\ \hline 25 \overline{) 6,252.5} \\ \underline{50} \phantom{00} \\ 125 \phantom{00} \\ \underline{125} \phantom{00} \\ 25 \phantom{00} \\ \underline{25} \phantom{00} \end{array}$$

children think the parents are wrong; and the latter are too annoyed by the suggestion to find out how little difference there is between the statement required and the one which they themselves were taught.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

When parents studied Percentage, they perhaps learned to solve all problems under that heading by the hard and fast rules of determining what terms are given in the example and operating according to the prescribed formula. For example, in such a problem as "Sixty per cent of a man's salary is \$2,400, how much does he earn a year?" the parent would say, "\$2,400 is the percentage, 60% is the rate, the whole salary, or base, is to be found. Percentage divided by rate equals base. Therefore \$2,400 divided by 60% = \$4,000, or his yearly salary."

The teacher, however, is instructing her class that  $60\% = \frac{6}{10}$ ;  $\frac{6}{10} = \$2,400$ ;  $\frac{1}{10} = \frac{\$2,400}{6}$  or \$400;  $\frac{10}{10} = \$400 \times 10$ , or \$4,000, the yearly salary. *Ans.*

In the above, and in various other instances that might be cited, the difference in method or statement can be grasped in a moment, if time is taken to examine the text-book used or to consult the teacher. If school reports show that pupils are getting on satisfactorily in Arithmetic, it is better for them not to receive help at home, since the skilful teacher will know better how to present the work in a way to develop the reasoning powers. If, however, pupils are floundering — and many are — then parents

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

should find out in what way the teacher's efforts can best be supplemented at home, for often children will require more individual help in this subject than a teacher of a large class can give.

### LANGUAGE

In the Intermediate Grades, oral and written composition, literature study, aside from the Reading text-book, and Grammar are often included in the program under the heading, "Language." A book which presents ideas of sentences, the parts of a sentence, and the chief parts of speech in a simple way, and also includes pictures, fables, and other short stories for composition work, poems for study and memorizing, and various exercises in punctuation and in drill on the correct form of words frequently used incorrectly, is studied by pupils.

Two pitfalls often attend the use of such books. So many different topics are presented that the really vital ones are not sufficiently impressed. Teachers frequently spend far too much time on the technical grammar points included, neglecting features that would tend to produce growth in power of oral and written expression.

The question naturally arises, "What are the really vital points for Intermediate Grade pupils?" From one standpoint, whatever

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

will arouse a greater interest in and appreciation of good literature is vital. From another, any exercises that will bring about growth in fluency and correctness of oral expression are very important; while from the standpoint of written composition, improvement in sentence sense and in facility and correctness of written expression are the essential things.

The first point cited need give little concern, for if pupils complete several good texts in the Reading class, have progressively selected library books which they may draw from week to week during the year to read at home, and memorize several good poems each term, their progress in literature is likely to be reasonably satisfactory. Power in oral composition, too, ought to be gained, providing the recitations in Reading, Geography, and other subjects are properly conducted; therefore attention here may be largely directed to the last point,—namely, the development of sentence sense and facility and correctness of written expression.

A critical observer in many schools will find far too little difference in the written composition work of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades. Pupils do write more on a topic and use longer sentences as they advance in the grades; but often little growth in showing where one sentence ends and a

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

new one begins is evident. Often, too, the gain in appearance and form of the written composition is far from what it should be.

One of the chief causes of the lack of growth in sentence sense is that there is too much drill in exercises requiring isolated sentences, and far too little in combining sentences into paragraphs. Technical grammar points are learned and illustrated by sample sentences, but pupils fail to be impressed with the vital connection between the grammar facts and correct oral and written expression. When pupils are sufficiently advanced to understand the difference between a group of words not a sentence and one that expresses complete thought, much use should be made of the paragraph in illustrating points of Grammar. Combining given sentences into paragraphs is of course the first step; but after that is understood, brief original paragraphs should be used daily to illustrate the different points taught. When such lessons are accompanied by adequate practice in correctly writing unpunctuated paragraphs, prepared by the teacher especially to illustrate the topic studied, a progressive gain in sentence sense should result.

Throughout the Language work in the Intermediate Grades, the plan of procedure, suggested under Written Composition in the preceding chapter, should be followed. Im-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

portant new points concerning punctuation and form should be thoroughly learned and their use made a habit. Freedom and length should be encouraged in oral expression, but in written composition, the aim should be chiefly for brevity and correctness, until reasonable power in sentence sense is attained. Copying sample paragraphs that are spirited in style and well expressed, and afterward writing the same from memory, should be continued, since much benefit can be gained from this exercise.

All the points under Composition Correction mentioned in the last chapter apply with equal force in teaching Intermediate Grade pupils. Only a very few points of criticism should be considered in a composition. The fact that there is a mistake in a line should be indicated, but pupils should find out for themselves what the mistake is. Occasionally, too, in the Sixth Grade, pupils may be asked to correct each other's compositions, care being taken to have the best pupils exchange with the poorest, and so on through the class.

The practice of having pupils critically examine every written paper before handing it in to teachers should likewise be continued. The rule that slovenly work of any kind, either at school or at home, must be re-written should be rigidly applied until

## FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

careful, intelligent papers become the habit. The author well remembers a childhood chum who once a week had to write a letter to his father, a resident of a distant city. For many months the afternoon of that letter-writing was one of imprisonment, since the grandmother steadfastly refused to accept the carelessly written notes which the lad, eager to get out with his companions, was wont to write. His sympathetic playmates pitied him for this seeming misfortune, not having the sense at that time to see the connection between the grandmother's discipline and the great improvement in the lad's letter-writing and other composition work.

### GEOGRAPHY

Correct ideas of directions and facility in finding locations on maps are essentials which should be early acquired in the Intermediate Grades. Teachers sometimes give pupils too much aid in map location work. As modern Geographies usually have clear, well printed maps, and contain few, if any, questions on unimportant places, children of ordinary intelligence can readily find the required locations and should be made to rely on themselves.

Information about the earth as a whole and the facts of mathematical and physical geography necessary to an elementary under-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

standing of climate and change of seasons are among the most difficult topics studied in these grades. "Seven Little Sisters" and other books mentioned in the preceding chapter have prepared the way for an acquaintance with the earth as a whole. In actual study, a Tellurian Globe on the teacher's table, with about half as many small globes for children to have on their desks as there are pupils in the room, is an excellent equipment for this work. With these a very good idea can be given of the relative position and size of the continents and the various bodies of water surrounding them. One of these small globes is likewise a very useful as well as inexpensive article to have at home to arouse children's curiosity and help them gain clearer ideas of the earth.

Observations which children can be led to make of the position of the sun in the heavens at various times of the year and the connection of this with the relative length of day and night and the seasons, of the relation of the direction of the wind to temperature and rainfall, of frost, steam, dew, and various forms of moisture, lead up to the study of climate, change of seasons, and other facts of physical and mathematical geography usually included in school texts. Such books as "Earth and Sky Every Child Should Know" (Rogers), Holden's "Family



#### FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

---

of the Sun," Griffith's "The Stars and Their Stories," Ball's "Star Land," Du Chaillu's "Land of the Long Night," Kirby's "The Sea and Its Wonders" and Ingersoll's "Book of the Ocean" are intensely interesting to many children, and furnish an excellent basis for a comprehensive understanding of this usually difficult subject.

Next to actual travel, moving pictures and stereopticon slides are the best possible means for giving children correct ideas of the places and life which geographies describe. Through them the pastoral environment of the country may be vividly impressed upon the minds of city children; the teeming life of the city may be realistically shown to the youth of the rural districts; oceans may be crossed, mountains ascended, and the entire realm of nature, life and industry faithfully portrayed.

Such books as Carpenter's Geographical Readers, the World and Its People Series and Winslow's Geography Readers, which are often used for supplementary reading in school in connection with the various countries studied, add largely to the pupils' fund of information. The series of books entitled "Little People Everywhere" is very attractive in appearance and in literary style, and is excellent for children to read at home, as the author has especially aimed to present

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

information in a way that will interest young folk.

A home scrap-book in Geography prepared by children may be made a very helpful aid in arousing interest in this subject. At the outset about four-tenths of the pages should be set aside for the United States and divided among the various groups of states. About one-tenth should be given to the rest of North America, two-tenths to Europe, and one-tenth each to Asia, Africa and Australia and the Islands of the Pacific. If the child is encouraged to cut out any pictures or interesting items he sees in papers or magazines and paste them in the part of the scrap-book allotted the country referred to therein, he will have in time prepared a book which will contain much valuable information and will be a source of much interest to him.

The recitation in Geography may be made most useful in developing power in oral expression, if topical recitation is largely insisted upon by teachers. When hearing children recite the geography lesson at home, parents may help to cultivate this power by encouraging them to tell all about a topic in one recitation instead of drawing out the information by numerous questions.

## CHAPTER X

### CO-OPERATION IN SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES AND FIRST YEAR HIGH SCHOOL

SINCE the so-called common branches, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, and Spelling, which pupils have been studying so long a time, are usually completed in the Seventh and Eighth years, these grades constitute a period somewhat different from the six which have preceded. They are a time of rounding out information, of clarifying and clinching various points and facts that may have been forgotten, or may not have been fully understood. These grades are also a period of higher tension, since teachers in anticipation of *final examinations* are usually more definite in instruction and more exacting in requirements than their colleagues of the preceding grades; while pupils are likewise more industrious and careful in their preparation, for to everybody and to everybody's father and mother, failure to graduate from Grammar School would be most regrettable.

This period is likewise one of longer and more difficult lessons, in the preparation of which pupils have to rely upon their own

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

efforts more than in preceding grades; yet the fact that self-reliance is altogether too little cultivated during these years is one of the chief faults of instruction.

### READING

If the reading book is not given up entirely in the Seventh Grade, it is often more or less side-tracked for supplementary Geography and United States History texts. This naturally follows, since teachers have a large amount of subject matter to cover in these subjects, and reading the texts is the quickest and easiest way to accomplish that result. This practice is unfortunate, because reading-book selections are usually of higher literary value than geography and history texts. It is also regrettable for the reason that getting information before the class is often the chief, if not the only, aim of the teacher. A better plan is to use reading books in school, and have pupils read the supplemental geography and history texts at home, requiring an oral account of the home reading during the recitation in the subject at school.

In the Eighth Grade, reading is largely confined to such prose texts as Sharpe's "A Watcher in the Woods," Warner's "In the Wilderness," Burroughs' "Birds and Bees," and Hawthorne's "Tanglewood Tales"; in

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

poetry, to Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish" or "Evangeline" or Scott's "Marmion" or "Lady of the Lake." In First Year High School, Scott's "Ivanhoe," Stevenson's "Treasure Island," and similar stories furnish the basic prose, while Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal," Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," Homer's "Iliad" or "Odyssey," and Shakespeare's "As You Like It" or "Midsummer Night's Dream" are among the most frequently studied poems and plays.

The text of these selections is usually critically read and discussed, and genuine interest in the essay, story, or play is often aroused. The life and personality of the various authors studied are also frequently considered with much spirit and enthusiasm.

In connection with the literature study in these years, however, there are often three weak points, which parents might do much at home to strengthen. Believing that the final examination is likely to require the narration of an incident, the characterization of a person, or the description of some scene from the text, teachers want their pupils to become thoroughly acquainted with the entire story, poem, or play, and so have it read aloud in class. Since there is some loss of time in having different pupils read, or because many may read more or

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

less poorly, it happens that the reading is largely or entirely done by the teacher and the students get little practice in reading aloud. Another great loss is that so much time is occupied in reading the entire selection in school that little opportunity is left to interest a class in other works by the same author. It is a much better plan to require pupils to read many chapters or parts of chapters at home, and hold them strictly accountable for the content of the text covered in this way; yet the former method is perhaps more widely used.

An excellent offset for such losses, and a most helpful and enjoyable practice, regardless of school instruction, is to have a Home Reading Club, composed of Father, Mother, and the children of the family who are old enough to be interested. Such a club should meet as often as possible, and each member should take his turn at reading aloud and try his best to interest the others. Thus many good books may be completed and some very happy hours added to the home recollections.

For example, the study of "Evangeline" in school may be supplemented at home with the best of Longfellow's shorter poems and with "Hiawatha" and "The Courtship of Miles Standish" as well. The glimpse of Scott's historic panorama afforded by the

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

study of "Ivanhoe" in school may be enlarged through an acquaintance with "The Talisman," "Kenilworth," "The Heart of Midlothian," "Quentin Durward," and others of that great romancer's masterpieces. The many-sidedness of Lowell may be illustrated by "The Fable for Critics," "Biglow Papers," "The Present Crisis," "The First Snow-Fall," and the "Commemoration Ode," during the term that "The Vision of Sir Launfal" is being studied in the classroom. "As You Like It" at school paves the way for "The Merchant of Venice," "Hamlet," "Julius Cæsar," and numerous other famous plays by the master dramatist, while similar attractive vistas will be readily unfolded by other selections. When business or social engagements keep parents from participating, the younger members should read silently by themselves, and at the next session of the circle give an oral account of the chapters thus completed.

What if newspaper reading does have to be abridged! What if the club must be slighted, the automobile allowed an occasional rest, the "Bridge" or "Cribbage" omitted, or the "Movies" relegated to an occasional visit! Any one of these curtailments will prove a benefit rather than a sacrifice to parents. And even if this should not be the case, what tremendous returns such self-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

denial may bring in the consciousness of making home more attractive and of increasing parental influence on the budding minds and characters of the household!

↓ Parents who have provided their children with food, clothing, shelter, and instruction commensurate with their station in life, and have likewise accustomed them to mingle with other people in a reasonably decorous manner, certainly have good reason for feeling that their obligation to their offspring has been creditably filled. If, in addition to this, they have likewise taken time to be companions of their children, personally conducting them through the fascinating realms of nature and bookland and tactfully entering into both their tasks and their pleasures, how much greater satisfaction they may well feel! Some years ago such family circles, with games as well as books for diversion, were more common. The Question Game, Logomachy, Anagrams, Geography, History, and Author Games, Dominoes, Checkers, "Jenkins Up," Going to Jerusalem, and even Pinning the Tail on the Donkey, are all so much more fun when Father and Mother take part. Surely Mothers' Clubs and other organizations interested in improving the condition of children should most heartily recommend the Home Reading and Game Circle.



## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

### PENMANSHIP

The habit of free, legible penmanship should be well established by the time children reach the Seventh Grade, but unfortunately this is often not the case. In such instances the cause must be found and remedied. Frequently it may be traced to long-continued scratch writing, and in other instances incorrect pen-holding or lack of freedom in using the arm may be the cause.

Whatever the defects may be, the pupil's attention must be directed to them one at a time, and his effort to conquer each in turn must be persistent. Penmanship is one subject in which "firing at the mark generally" brings little result. The faults must be definitely pointed out and the method of improvement clearly understood. A pupil may be daily told that his writing is discreditable and that he ought to improve it, yet the slightest improvement will not result, even though he may practice long and regularly. On the other hand, if the teacher definitely calls attention to the incorrect pen-holding, constricted arm movement, poor letter forms, or whatever the fault may be, and at the same time clearly illustrates the correct way, pupils who perseveringly try will eventually make satisfactory improvement. Occasional tests, considering only the point or points

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

that particular effort is being made to overcome, will help, especially if the papers are taken home for the inspection and approval of parents. The process is necessarily slow, since the incorrect habit has become so firmly established; but under a skilful teacher even the most hopeless cases will become good writers.

There is nothing one has to write more often than his own name. It is therefore important that pupils should early decide upon how much of the given names shall be included in the signature, and frequently practice writing it in a creditable manner. In banking business it is important for depositors to have a characteristic signature that can be readily recognized. This fact should be explained to young folk as early as the Seventh Grade, so that the right kind of signature may soon become a habit.

Since unruled paper is now so generally used, it is important that drill in writing on paper without lines should be given in school, and if this kind is not available, practice in writing across the lines of ruled paper should be given.

√ It sometimes happens that young people who are starting to work in mercantile positions are handicapped by the habit of making poor figures. Drill on correct figure forms, as well as on the letters, should be

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

given throughout the grades. Since so many pupils complete their school education with the eight or ninth year, it is especially important that Grammar Grade teachers should be most careful to see that individual pupils correct any bad habits they may have formed in making figures.

### SPELLING

If a pupil is still very inaccurate in Spelling after reaching the Grammar Grades, he need not necessarily be considered a hopeless case for whom marked improvement is quite impossible. Indeed his very greatest trouble is often loss of confidence and the feeling that there is no use in trying.

Teachers should first carefully diagnose the case to see whether the inability is due to weakness in eye or ear perception or possibly to both. After the spelling difficulty has been determined and a clear explanation of it made to both pupil and parents, all should earnestly co-operate to overcome the defect. If this plan is intelligently followed, the pupil's confidence will in time be restored, and improvement will result. Probably gain in eye and ear perception will not come as readily as it might have, if some wise teacher had earnestly and intelligently sought to conquer the difficulty earlier in the grades;

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

but persistent effort will usually bring the desired results.

Practically all of the suggestions on spelling made in the chapter on Primary Grade work apply equally well in this period. It is also important not to waste time either in studying or in using in sentences words which children can already spell and of which they know the meaning, or words for which they are likely to have very little use. Since it will be some time before pupils who are very backward in spelling will be able to do as well as the average of a class, it is an excellent plan to have them competing with their own records. As compared with others their spelling may be very poor; but in contrast with their own previous daily records, a remarkable gain may be shown. Like the enthusiastic golfer, they may be spurred to renewed endeavor by this evidence of daily improvement.

## ARITHMETIC

Upon reaching the Seventh Grade the great majority of a class should be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rapidly without groping or hesitation and with reasonable accuracy. However, the large amount of time more or less wasted in many schools in concretely illustrating the combi-

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

nations, in playing arithmetic games, and in trying to have pupils reason examples beyond their capacity, has left altogether too little opportunity for the fundamental drill in computation which is absolutely essential in the early years. It follows as a natural consequence that many pupils of the higher grades not only are grossly inaccurate in the fundamental operations, but also grope and hesitate for answers which should come like a flash.

Now there would be a redeeming element in the situation, if the claim could be made that the concrete illustration and reasoning work piled up in the first four years of school produced better reasoners in the succeeding grades. It must be admitted, however, that the opposite effect is noted, nor is the cause difficult to trace. Children are taught to reason problems beyond their capacity which, a year or two later, might be easily mastered. They do often succeed in repeating the required statements glibly, thus pleasing their teachers with apparently good results. Nevertheless the little folk have in many cases only remembered well what their instructors have very clearly and perhaps frequently presented to them. Given another problem, based on exactly the same principle but with the wording slightly changed, and many children will be entirely at sea. Instead of

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

learning to reason, they have simply been memorizing the teacher's reasoning.

With a similar status in reasoning work in several successive grades, it is no wonder that some pupils, on reaching the Seventh Grade, are fully convinced that they can never do problems, and so keep on guessing and floundering in a most helpless way if new examples happen to present the least unfamiliar aspect. Too often this state of mind is never reformed. Mathematically speaking, the pupil fails ever to get on the track, but continues to bump uncomfortably and disconsolately over the ties through the entire journey. Somehow, after several trials perhaps, the final examination in Arithmetic is passed. Then the fearsome and sometimes often retraced road through Algebra and Geometry is accomplished; and later, perchance, the young woman emerges from a Normal or Training School with a diploma entitling her to conduct unsuspecting youth through the tortuous paths of reasoning as she has traversed them. And she does it.

Nevertheless, if a child entering the Seventh Grade is found to be slow and inaccurate in computation, or backward and floundering in reasoning, he should not necessarily be given up as a hopeless case. For the former defect, individual drill on the

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

forty-five combinations, as suggested in the chapter on Primary Grades, is the best remedy. Attaining proficiency will be a far harder and longer process than it would have been, had a similar determined effort been made four or five years earlier, but perseverance will accomplish the desired end in many cases, even at this late period.

In the matter of improving the reasoning, "Right about! Face!" is likewise the only course. The plan for attacking new problems, outlined under Intermediate Grades, or something similar, must be adopted. The feeling that one simply can not learn Arithmetic — a notion, by the way, often too little discouraged both in school and at home — must be eradicated. To a certain degree, learning to reason problems is like learning to ride a bicycle. As long as the rider is fearful of losing his balance, down the wheel will plunge to right or left the moment the instructor lets go his hold. But when consciousness dawns upon the rider that if he sits erect and keeps the pedals moving, his equilibrium will be maintained, he glides like a bird through the air, wondering how he ever could have been so awkward and afraid. So in mathematical problems, when pupils cease to be confused, and instead of thoughtlessly guessing at the process, read the examples over carefully to determine

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

exactly what is wanted before performing any operations, they, too, will wonder why problems that are so easy, ever seemed puzzling and impossible.

Now in teaching higher grade pupils who are especially backward in Arithmetic, placing particularly strong emphasis upon certain points helps to make the subject much simpler and clearer to pupils.

One of the first of these is the fact that the expression of a fraction is the same as an example in Division, the numerator corresponding to the dividend and the denominator to the divisor; and that the necessity for the fractional expression arises when the dividend is smaller than the divisor or can not contain it without a remainder. The differences and similarities of common and decimal fractions, their equivalency and interchangeability, and also the differences between whole number and decimal fraction notation, constitute a second feature most important to make clear.

Another point which pupils often fail to grasp is the exact difference between linear, square, and cubic measures and the practical uses of each. They learn the tables and work examples under each; but in a few weeks, more or less, the whole is likely to be a medley of numbers and dimensions, with visions of carpet bought by the square



## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

yard and paper put on by the cubic foot, because the simple, elementary differences were not clearly understood in the beginning.

The close relation of percentage to common and decimal fractions, and the similarity of the various topics under percentage to examples in fractions, is perhaps one of the points most essential of all to comprehend. To feel that something brand new is being undertaken every time a succeeding topic is taken up, makes a study far harder for pupils than it otherwise would be. When the close relation between the old and the new is clearly developed, and children actually sense the fact that though the terms of the new topic are unfamiliar, the principle involved and the mode of procedure are already well understood, the subject is much simplified.

For this reason, it is much simpler and better to treat the problems under the various headings of Percentage and Its Applications as examples in fractions, changing the rate per cent. to common fractional form whenever time will be saved thereby, than to apply specific formulæ, such as "Percentage divided by base equals rate." Indeed, because of the numerous topics in Percentage, gaining clear ideas as to their close relation with fractions, may alone

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

change a pupil backward in Arithmetic to one of average ability.

It is also helpful to keep in mind the fact that there are likewise some points in Arithmetic that it is well to memorize thoroughly at the outset. The number of figures in each of the orders of units to hundred-millions in whole numbers, and hundred-millionths in decimals, is one of the very first of these. How many pupils might have been saved wobbling and uncertainty in writing numbers throughout the grades, if, by a little stiff memorizing in the beginning, the fact that there are seven figures in millions and six in millionths, together with similar information in regard to the other orders of units, had been so well fastened in mind at the start that the figures would come automatically from the pencil the second the number required to be expressed is seen or heard.

Another point that children in higher grades seem not to have learned well, is the fact that Cancellation can not be employed when some of the different numbers above and below the line have plus or minus signs between them, instead of multiplication. This point can be easily impressed and should be at the right time.

The simple rules of multiplication and division of fractions constitute a third apparently much neglected heading. Teachers

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

of Manual Training are frequently astounded at the ignorance boys who have completed Arithmetic show in estimating such simple parts of a measurement as  $\frac{2}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ,  $\frac{5}{8}$  and  $\frac{7}{8}$ —sometimes even thinking that these pupils could never have been taught these operations. Undoubtedly the topics were taught them, but the failure resulted from not requiring a thorough memorizing of the rules and sufficient application of the same.

The decimal equivalents of  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{2}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$ ,  $\frac{2}{5}$ ,  $\frac{3}{5}$ ,  $\frac{4}{5}$ ,  $\frac{1}{6}$ ,  $\frac{5}{6}$ ,  $\frac{1}{7}$ ,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ,  $\frac{5}{8}$ ,  $\frac{7}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{9}$ ,  $\frac{1}{10}$ ,  $\frac{3}{10}$ ,  $\frac{7}{10}$ , and  $\frac{9}{10}$  should be memorized so thoroughly that pupils can change from one to the other automatically, when time will be saved by so doing.

Knowing the squares and cubes of numbers from 1 to 12 and the square roots and cube roots of their second and third powers is useful information that should be better memorized than it is by many classes.

Aside from lack of accuracy and rapidity in computation and inability to make a business-like attack on a problem involving reasoning, the points herein suggested as worthy of clearer understanding or more thorough memorizing are the chief weaknesses which the author encountered during several years of teaching Business Arithmetic and Algebra in a city Evening High School. In trying to help pupils who are

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

backward in Arithmetic, parents and teachers will certainly find these points well worth their careful attention.

### LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

In some schools considerable technical grammar is taught prior to the Seventh Year, but, not being fully comprehended by pupils, most of this information is soon forgotten. This need give teachers and parents little concern, providing pupils, upon entering the Seventh Grade, have a fair understanding of the various kinds of simple sentences and of easy compound sentences, together with the ability to apply that knowledge readily in oral and written composition. If children at this period can also rapidly and accurately pick out the principal words (simple subject and simple predicate) and the modifying words of such sentences, a good foundation has been laid for the language and composition work to follow.

Too much technical grammar is often taught in the Seventh and Eighth Grades, but not because anyone has discovered it to be of especial help in developing good oral or written English. On the contrary, very slight benefit to either oral or written expression results from the study of the numerous subdivisions of parts of speech and various other topics that consume so much valuable

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

time, for such improvement must largely come from frequent critical practice in speaking and writing.

Nevertheless the topics cited as of little practical value continue to be subject matter which is sure to receive liberal attention in final examinations, and hence must be well crammed. As long as this anomaly continues, teachers should strive to have the subject matter presented well learned, as a matter of mental discipline. At the same time, if progress in oral and written language is to ensue, instructors should manage, early in the Seventh Grade, to teach the use of phrases and clauses as modifiers in place of a word, and much practice should be given in substituting a phrase or a clause for a word, and *vice versa*. During this work great care should be taken to train both the eye and the ear to sense the correct place for ending a sentence and beginning a new one, since without such pains even pupils who have shown very good sentence sense in preceding grades are likely to become careless and inaccurate in this respect.

At this point it is excellent practice to copy from a book good paragraphs containing various types of subordinate clauses and then try to write the whole paragraph from memory, later comparing the result with the text in the book.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

Writing unpunctuated paragraphs, containing subordinate clauses, and putting in the capital letters and punctuation marks necessary to make good sense, is a most excellent second step in this work and one that should be much employed.

After a fair degree of accuracy as to sentence sense in paragraphs containing complex sentences has been cultivated, pupils should be trained in organizing thought and in expressing it in an orderly, logical, coherent and pleasing manner. Again sample discourse should be studied; but this time for the purpose of seeing how the author has expressed his thought. Narration, being the easiest type of composition, should be undertaken first. Pupils should be led to note the topic sentence and what it contains, to observe that events are written in the order of their occurrence and each one completed before the next is taken up; to see that the paragraph has been made coherent by using words that bind the thoughts together, and that the style of expression is more pleasing because of the variety of ways that different sentences are begun and closed.

Then an outline, which the author might have used, should be constructed on the blackboard by the teacher and class together; and with this as a basis the entire selection should be written from memory and the

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

result compared with the text in the book. Original work with similar topics should then be tried, each pupil making his own outline. For instance, if the original subject was "The Boyhood of Washington," the Boyhood of Lincoln might be undertaken; if the sample text was "The Adventure of a Rabbit," The Gray Squirrel's Adventure, The Experience of a Lost Dog, or something similar could be advantageously used.

After considerable practice of this kind has been carefully conducted, pupils should be ready for original work in narration on ordinary subjects with which they may be made familiar. Of course care should be taken to choose interesting subjects and to get the thought well organized before written composition work is begun.

When some facility has been gained in independent narration, description and exposition should be considered, in turn, in a similar way. Care should be taken to use the best possible models for study, and to proceed from brief to longer examples in the various selections studied under each type.

The best way for children to learn to do many things in everyday life is to watch others and imitate them, since it is the simplest and most natural method. For a similar reason, the best way for young folk

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

to acquire facility and accuracy in the use of English is to study good models, intelligently observe how clearness, order, coherence, and pleasing style were gained by the authors, and then try their best to imitate these good examples, aiming to develop power in original and independent work after facility in the easier type of composition has been acquired.

To spend hours each week in discussing isolated sentences containing various grammatical constructions, and then perhaps once a month, more or less, to write an essay with no especial aim in view, and often without the slightest connection between the grammatical study and the written expression being shown, may produce martinets at reciting Grammar. That this is a most wasteful method for cultivating power in using good oral and written English, is daily demonstrated in far too many schools.

In addition to the suggestions already made, the following will be found helpful in dealing with children who are backward in English composition.

Usually have oral expression precede the written. Also conduct regular periods in oral composition, in which pupils previously designated speak as fluently as possible on topics that were assigned some days before. Careful, definite preparation for these reci-



## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

tations should be made by pupils. They should try to speak accurately and connectedly on the subject, finishing one point of the topic before taking up the next. Intelligent criticism of both praiseworthy and censurable points along the lines suggested should follow each recitation. A class record of this oral work should be kept, and due credit on the year's work in English should be allowed.

Pupils should be impressed with the fact that words are the material with which language is built, and that in oral and written expression, as in other structures, much depends upon good judgment in selecting that which is strongest and most beautiful; that usually the shorter common word is preferable to the longer and more unusual one expressing the same idea; that repetition of words and of sounds near together, except for the sake of emphasis, is to be avoided; and that any succession of words hard to enunciate should not be employed.

Pupils should also fully realize that in language expression, as in other things, variety is spice. For this reason, long sentences should be mingled with short ones, occasional questions and exclamations with statements; in some the subject and predicate should appear in regular order, while in others a prepositional or a participial phrase

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

or a subordinate clause should begin the expression. The fact that rapidity of action is expressed through successive short sentences can also be readily understood.

In a preceding chapter, it was recommended that pupils always critically read over what they have written before considering the work finished. That habit should be continued, together with the additional practice of reading the composition aloud to satisfy oneself that the style flows smoothly and is pleasing to the ear.

In their reading of library books, pupils should also be urged to note carefully paragraphs that are especially pleasing to them, and to try to discover by what use of sentences and words the author has achieved a result so satisfying. Such observations, when skilfully initiated and tactfully encouraged by teachers and parents, are a most practical stimulus. They help to dissociate composition writing from the distasteful garb in which children are so wont to clothe it, and cause them to regard the subject as an art, — not a forbidding one, attainable only through the medium of diagrams and conjugations, but delightful, alluring, and fully open to all who will read the interesting work of the masters of literature and note intelligently how they have made words and sentences convey their thought.

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

### GEOGRAPHY

Since the study of Geography is now completed in many schools in the Sixth or Seventh Grade, the subject will require little attention in this chapter. Thorough review, and then much individual drill on the parts in which pupils are found weakest, is the best course with children who have fallen behind their class in this study. As was suggested in the preceding chapter, interesting Geographical Readers may be made very useful in this work. A series in which the subject matter is very concisely expressed is the best to use with this type of pupil.

### THE TRANSITION FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

Few parents realize how great the change from Elementary to High School work is for children. In the first place, Algebra, Latin, German or French, and Botany or Zoology, which are among the subjects usually pursued in first year High School, are quite different from the old familiar studies of the Grammar Grades. If the introduction to these is wise and tactful, the interest of pupils is soon aroused and half of the battle is won. If, however, the approach to the new work is poorly paved, the process of falling behind may be swift and sure.

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

The plan of recitation is another very material difference. In most elementary schools Eighth Grade pupils have the same teacher in all subjects, being under her supervision both for study and recitation. The skilful instructor soon becomes very well acquainted with each individual, understands his strength and weakness, and applies the right stimulus at just the right time to secure the best results. If the homework assigned is not satisfactorily prepared, she can keep the pupil after school until it is done. In case a child is copying lessons from others, the fraud is readily discovered and the culprit sternly made to paddle his own canoe. Not only daily, but hourly, the teacher exercises the particular influence and pressure best calculated to keep up the right *esprit de corps*. Since it is the highest grade, the class is one of the most important of the school and hence has one of the most efficient teachers.

In High School, pupils usually have a different instructor for each study. As the most recently appointed teachers are often assigned to the first year's work, the instructors are likely to be the least experienced of the entire faculty. With three or more separate groups of pupils, it is necessarily a comparatively long time before a teacher becomes well acquainted with any

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

---

but the exceptionally bright or very dull ones, nor is it possible for her to call on them all enough in recitation periods to keep well in touch with their lesson preparation. As a matter of habit, most pupils start high school work with good intentions. Seeing that others, who make little or no preparation, seem to escape difficulty, some begin to slight their work. Gradually they slip farther and farther away from their former standards of preparation, imagining that because no one seems to be personally following them up, all will go well, until the third or fourth monthly review finds them either very disinterested pupils or so hopelessly behind that dropping out of school is the natural consequence.

It must also be admitted that the atmosphere of many high schools tends to turn the minds of pupils from thorough preparation. There is too much desire to enjoy society and too little to excel in study; too much "Hurrah Boys!" and shouting for the teams and too little settling down to business and keeping minds on the work in hand.

The best remedy for this condition is to have Eighth Grade teachers make their pupils more self-reliant by giving them less personal help and following-up. Then if High School principals will so arrange that at least one of the teachers a pupil has makes

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

it her business to become well acquainted with him and to keep well in touch with the kind of preparation he is making for his various studies, much of the difficulty described can be obviated.

Even though the latter status may exist in a school system, it is nevertheless important for fathers and mothers to be very watchful of their children during this transition period. Besides the conditions mentioned, the age of pupils and the greater freedom of the entire High School environment make it most essential that the guiding minds of parents keep in especially close and sympathetic touch with their children during this particular year.

## CHAPTER XI

### NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

**T**HE present World War has made the question of NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS overshadow all others. How the very largest number of laborers and soldiers may be marshalled most advantageously; in what way the farms and manufactories may be made to produce their largest possible output; and how the food supply may be most wisely and justly conserved, are among the subjects which are absorbing the minds of those who are now responsible for our national honor and efficiency.

Since the home is the unit of the nation and children are the most valuable asset of the home, it follows that the more efficient the training they receive, the better will be the preparedness of the family and likewise of the nation. From a patriotic duty then, as well as from a personal one, parents should take intelligent interest in the education of their children and do all they can to make it as efficient as possible. In doing this they will need to put aside several educational fallacies which are more or less common. ✓

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

One of these is that it is practically useless for a child, especially a boy, to study Drawing, unless he is destined to become an artist. In their estimation, the portrait and landscape constitute the only field in which skill with pencil can bring material return — a field, by the way, which is naturally regarded as precarious. Architecture, designing, newspaper and book illustrating, engraving, and basic working drawings in the various trades, all of which make this subject one of the most practical in the school curriculum, have somehow escaped their observation. Nor has the utilitarian or the æsthetic benefit of training the eye to recognize harmony and beauty in combinations of colors appealed to their prosaic imaginations. It is indeed fortunate that both the commercial and the æsthetic value of training in Drawing are becoming more widely recognized.

Another notion equally fallacious is that music-reading is a fad which should not be allowed to trespass on the realm of the sacred Three R's. They who have this idea forget that almost every person will, or at least should, sing on numerous times and occasions in life, and that it is indeed pathetic that anyone should have to participate in such a splendid universal diversion by guesswork, when efficient instruction in the elementary schools may establish a good working basis



## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

---

for accuracy. Furthermore, even from the purely material standpoint, the study of music in public schools is well worth while. Such instruction generates confidence, which in turn begets love for and facility in the art itself. There are few more direct avenues to good society than ability to enjoy and to participate in music, and certainly few more readily traceable roads to business success than those which start from social friendship and acquaintance.

Magnifying the utility of arithmetic is a third fallacy which is unquestionably very common. Parents with this delusion may possibly regret that John's or Mary's standing in various studies is poor, but as long as the mark in arithmetic is fairly good, the child's future career, in their opinion, is reasonably safe. Such folk think that the study of this subject cultivates facility which somehow will prove a strong factor in getting and holding a job and in developing reasoning power that is a sure forerunner of business acumen and ability.

Now rapidity and accuracy in the fundamental operations with whole numbers and fractions doubtless will help in holding a position and in gaining promotion therein. Other individual topics of Arithmetic are especially useful in special businesses, but facility in any one of these can be readily

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

acquired if occasion demands. In securing a position, however, ability to write a good letter or to converse with a prospective employer in a frank, courteous, and pleasing manner is the point which counts most. As far as developing reasoning power is concerned, the superiority of arithmetic over other studies is largely traditional. Reading, history, geography, or language, if properly taught, may prove equally efficacious. The development of this power in all subjects depends largely upon how much pupils are made to think for themselves.

Minimizing the value of language-study and concluding that unless a child is ambitious to become a minister or a lawyer, it is needless for him to learn to speak well; and that composition writing is more or less wasted effort, providing book or magazine writing is not the especial goal, is another misconception more or less widely cherished. While in estimating the value of various studies, comparisons are needless, and absolute values difficult to fix, both from the material and æsthetic sides there is probably no more beneficial subject in the elementary school curriculum than language and composition. Recognizing this fact, parents should encourage their children to excel in this study, rather than help to excuse them from making honest effort in it,

## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

---

The idea that a thirst for reading is a sure sign of mental power and future professional greatness is still another fallacy which should be driven from the lofty pedestal it has so long occupied. Almost with bated breath, parents will describe how William or Sally persists in reading to the entire exclusion of work and play; visions of Walter Scott, Abraham Lincoln, and other famous souls of the past very plainly rise up in their imaginations as the future of the loved offspring is discussed. The character of the books he likes to read, how much he remembers of them, the condition of his eyes or general health, are sometimes never even considered. That he hungers for books is in itself all-sufficient.

Passionate love for reading may do as much for your child and for mine as it did for Walter Scott or Abraham Lincoln. At any rate, it is likely to broaden the scope of their information and largely increase their vocabularies. Nevertheless, an undue amount of reading may do a child great injury by keeping him from necessary healthful play, permanently injuring his eyes, creating an appetite for the unreal or the too exciting, or by making a sieve of his memory. The reading habit should be encouraged, by all means, but intelligent interest and wise supervision on the part of parents are neces-

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

sary, if it is to become the greatest possible factor for benefit in the child's education.

Perhaps the greatest fallacy of all is the widely prevalent idea that dislike for a study or occupation excuses failure in it, and that the very best plan for the education of a child is to have him devote by far the larger part of his time to the study and work that may be most congenial and pleasant. The theory is that the future business or profession of children will be along the line for which they seem to have a natural taste. Therefore effort expended in that direction will count, permanently, while especial exertion in other lines can produce little lasting benefit.

Now it is doubtless true that children, or anyone else for that matter, will most readily do the things in which they take the greatest interest. At the same time, the fact must be remembered that such preferences are variable. A boy of eleven may be so wrapt up in things electrical that he spends all the money he can beg or borrow for wireless and other expensive apparatus. Nevertheless, a few years later, he will sell a room full of such materials to the junk dealer for a few pennies to help swell his banjo fund.

Another point to be considered is that because of the irony of fate, or some more philosophical reason, persons rarely pursue a

career in the realm for which a pronounced bent was manifested in childhood. More or less unexpectedly, perhaps, it becomes necessary to earn a living. Nothing opens in the preferred line. At last something else does become available, is undertaken as a make-shift, and for various reasons finally leads to the life job.

The great point, however, is the value of the training itself. There may be no especial growth attained by just doing the things that can already be done well, but permanent power is sure to be developed through doing one's best at any work which is difficult or even distasteful. Other things being equal, the harder one has to grit his teeth and go to it, the greater is the actual benefit. For example, a child is born tone-deaf. "It's no use for him to study music,— he has no ear," the parent says. Now it has been demonstrated in numerous cases that a tone-deaf child can be taught both to recognize tunes, and to sing and play well. The process may be long and tedious. No doubt it will be most irksome for both pupil and teacher; yet what adult, who has thus escaped the great misfortune of being unable to recognize tunes or to participate in joyous music, will say that such training has not been most valuable for him?

Indeed the things that children naturally

## A PARENT'S JOB

---

do poorly are just the ones in which they most need instruction. If they are clumsy and awkward with their hands, then manual training is very essential. Should they show a keen dislike for any special study or work, that is doubtless a line in which a thorough course of instruction will prove especially beneficial. Instead of requesting school authorities to let their children give up Latin, drawing, or any other subject they may be trying to get out of, parents should co-operate more earnestly with the school to secure the best possible effort of their young folk in this particular line of work.

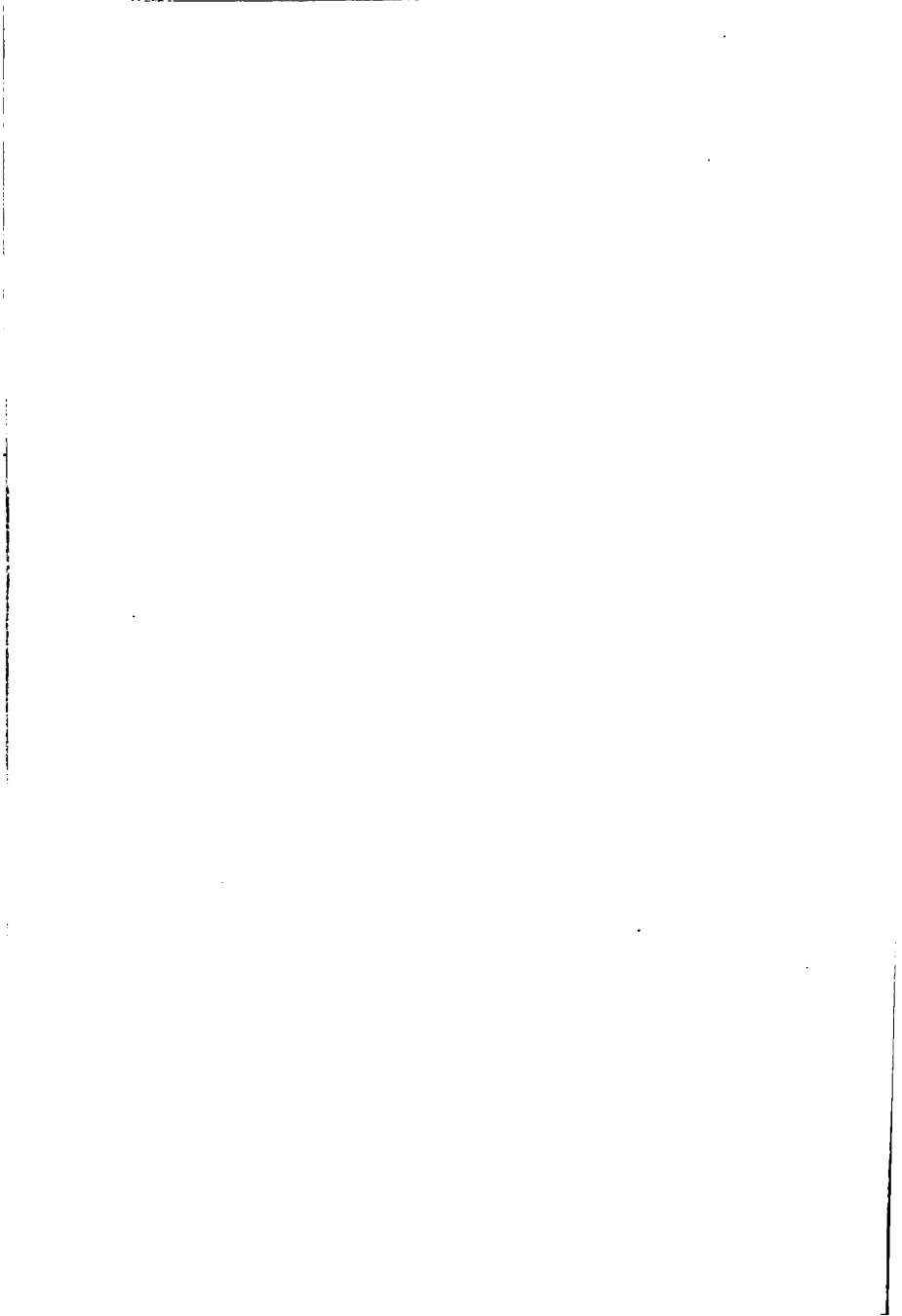
Furthermore, parents and pedagogues must both recognize the fact that if education is to become more practical and effective, changes in both subject matter and methods must ensue. Improvement in the quality of any manufactured article and in the time required to make it results from experimenting, and may be accomplished in a very brief time. However, changes in subject matter and in methods of teaching come about very slowly, since for various reasons experiments can not be readily conducted in public schools. It was many years before students who had not been thoroughly prepared in Greek were admitted to colleges, although much had been written and spoken in favor of such a step. It took a long time

## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

---

for teachers and parents to realize that children's minds might be developed by training the hand and the eye as well as by studying books, despite the fact that the point had been most ably and enthusiastically urged.

As is noted in preceding chapters, many departures from former educational ideas and methods have come in the past twenty years, and many more are on the way. It is therefore very important that parents should have an open mind towards any experiments educational authorities may be trying for the purpose of finding out if time can be saved and efficiency gained. If any topic or study can be taught just as effectively in a shorter time, or more effectively in a different way, it is important that such facts should be demonstrated. If the subject matter of any study may be profitably curtailed or increased, or if the study itself may be advantageously supplanted by another better fitted for that particular period of training, these truths should be made known. The earnest, intelligent interest and co-operation of parents are essential to inspire teachers to their best effort along these lines of investigation. Through such a desirable union of the home and the school the best possible welfare of the family and of the nation will be served. ✓





# INDEX

- Accuracy, 38
- Address, Habits of, 23-32
- Appreciation, 59
- Arithmetic, 135-149, 173-181, 198-206
- Blackboard, 103-104
- Books, 64, 108
- Character, Habits of, 45-68
- Composition, 151-157, 207-212
- Concentration, 34-36
- Conversation, 29
- Dictionary, Use of, 166-169
- Drawing, 218
- Ears, 89-90
- Eating, 78-79
- "Eating Air," 72
- Exercise, 90-92, 100-102
- Eyes, 87-89
- Fidelity, 60
- Foods, 77-79
- Generosity, 55-57
- Geography, 157-159, 185-188, 213
- Grammar Grades, 189-216
- Habits, Health, 61-98
- Habit, of breathing, 73-76
- Habit, Power of, 31, 37
- High School, 213
- Intermediate Grades, 160
- Kindergarten, 112-113
- Language, 149-151, 181-185, 206-208
- Modesty, 57-58
- Music, 218-219
- Neatness, 36-37
- Nervous Children, 92-93
- Obedience, 45-52
- Penmanship, 123-128, 169-171, 195-197
- Playroom, 103
- Politeness, 25
- Promotions, 10, 20
- Promptness, 33-34
- Punishments, 49-51
- Rapidity, 39
- Reading, 113-122, 160-169, 190-194, 221-222
- Religious Training, 62-66
- Report Cards, 9-11, 16-22
- Reverence, 61
- Self-reliance, 40-44
- Sex-Hygiene, 94-97
- Spelling, 128-135, 171-173, 197-198
- Table habits, 107-108
- Taft, Wm. H., 45
- Teeth, 80-83
- Thrift, 55-56
- Truthfulness, 52-55
- Voice, 25
- Water, 83-86

